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Abstract

The hospitality industry is a growing and diversified sector whose most important resource - as in any other service industry - is people and thus, the management of human resources is a critical activity and should not be treated lightly. However, the new 24/7 economy escenario represents a burden to offering the best work conditions in order to achieve the maximum efficiency and productivity. This paper suggests that human resources management should not only be concerned on ensuring that jobs are well executed and numerical results but should also consider the aspects which directly or indirectly affect individual employees effectiveness.

This paper defines the concept work-life balance (WLB) related to efficiency and productivity in the specific context of the hospitality industry and provides a list of good practices for HR professionals who are willing to tackle the WLB conflict at their workplaces. Indeed, it provides with knowledge on how WLB practices can influence employees' engagement and thus, their retention, in the hospitality industry.

The researchers have supported their findings with a summary of the existing literature that covers the concepts of WLB, WLB in the hospitality industry and HRM (Human Resources Management) practices related to WLB in the hospitality industry; and a research addressed to both employees of the hospitality industry and human resources managers through online questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

KEYWORDS: WLB, hospitality industry, job satisfaction, retention strategies, HR strategies, WLB practices.

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With her expertise and experience, Itziar has helped us get a better inside of Human Resources within the context of the Hospitality Industry and provided the guidelines to ensure that the objectives established were met. We would also like to highlight her dedication and interest which helped us have the motivation to continue with the project.

We would also like to thank all the people who participated in this project, especially during the data collection stage. As for these participants, on the one hand we would like to thank all respondents for having spent some of their time in answering the questionnaire and providing us with relevant information for its analysis and which helped withdrawing significant conclusions.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. CONTEXT OF RESEARCH

During the last decade there has been an increase of interest around the work-life balance – from now on referred to as WLB – debate and its implications for efficiency and productivity. In fact, nowadays only some workers experience work and life separate and balanceable (**Eikhof *et al.*, 2007**) whereas for other workers, work and life are intertwined, meaning that it is no possible to distinguish and disentangle work and life – either because they cannot or do not want to do so.

In regard to this matter, the hospitality industry is said to be one with incredibly low work-life balance rates. **Deery (2008)** suggests that obtaining a balance between work and life has a direct influence over employees' decision to remain with the organization. It is in that same article that she states that “maintaining a stable workforce is a key element in effective talent management strategy and yet over the years this has been something of a challenge for hospitality and tourism operators” (p. 792).

The Job Openings and Labor Turnover – December 2017, by the **Bureau of Labor Statistics by the US Department of Labor**, shows that the number of quits per month within the Leisure and Hospitality industry – subdivided in arts, entertainment and recreation and accommodation and food services – are higher than any others' (667 thousands). However, having a look at both categories separately, the quits in the first represent the three percent of total employment whereas that percentage for accommodation and food services ascends to 4.3. Thus, it is not surprising that often research has focused on the high turnover rates in the hospitality industry such as that conducted by **Brown *et al.* (2015)** cited in **Mooney *et al.* (2016)**.

Bearing in mind the facts explained before, there are two main challenges that the hospitality industry faces when it comes to WLB and employee retention. The first is that in a 24/7 economy it is key to deviate from the night to five workday, especially in a service industry such as hospitality (**Eikhof *et al.*, 2007**). The second is that according to **Mooney *et al.* (2016)** there is a generalized perception of low status in the jobs provided by the hospitality industry.

1.2. IDENTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Few authors have researched on the WLB within the hospitality industry and its direct relation to high turnover rates nor have provided Human Resources Managers of the industry with good practices to avoid employee turnover motivated by work-life or work-family conflicts. This is the reason why this research is relevant. It contributes to the literature on the topic and research of it by complementing that of **Deery (2008)** and **Deery and Jago (2015)**. This research focuses exclusively in WLB in the hospitality industry and retention strategies related to WLB policies.

There is extensive research has highlighted the importance of maintaining WLB both to the benefit of employees and employers and its relationship with employee retention and job satisfaction – see for example *Work-life balance and its relationship with organizational pride and job satisfaction* by **Mas-Machuca et al. (2016)**. In addition, there is even more literature covering the WLB concept and debate which provides an interesting list of assumptions, theories and good practices (**Eikhof et al., 2007; Vloeberghs, 2002; McDonald et al., 2013**).

1.3. ORIGINALITY AND CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

The research contribution to this study is twofold. On the one hand, it researches on a relatively undocumented topic enriching the literature about it and on the other hand, it provides with a list of good practices for HR Managers who are willing to tackle the WLB conflict at their workplaces.

The originality of this study is that besides the literature review on WLB and actual WLB practices in the hospitality industry it will include a series of questionnaires and surveys to hospitality industry professionals in order to prove or discard previous assumptions. Furthermore, it is one of the few treating the WLB conflict specifically in the Hospitality industry.

1.4. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The main aim of the research is to provide with knowledge on how WLB practices can influence employee engagement and thus, their retention, in the hospitality industry. In order to achieve that, it has been a necessity to target and cover the following topics which are at the same time the research objectives:

1. To examine the evolution of WLB practices throughout the years

2. To investigate WLB practices and its results in the hospitality industry
3. To find out what the hospitality industry professionals value most in regards to WLB practices
4. To provide HR Managers with a guide of successful WLB practices that help them retain the most talented employees within the organization.

1.5. STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

This section outlines the structure of the study and provides the reader with a list of the different concepts that will be discussed throughout this undergraduate dissertation.

Chapter 2: This chapter is a summary of the existing literature that covers the concepts of WLB, WLB in the hospitality industry and HRM (Human Resources Management) practices related to WLB in the hospitality industry. The chapter is divided in four main sections: work life balance, hospitality industry, work life balance in the hospitality industry and WLB practices for the hospitality industry. The chapter includes a literature map that summarizes the literature review and identifies the main topics treated and the authors who wrote the sources used to develop the review and a conceptual framework which identifies and organizes the specific theories, concepts and topics used for this research.

Chapter 3: In this chapter, the reader will be informed of the methodology used in this study to address the research problem that was previously identified: the relation of WLB and high turnover rates in the hospitality industry. The first sections of the chapter include the research approach, the data collection techniques and research instruments, the context and participants. Following the previous points, the study clarifies the techniques that were used to analyze the data, the ethical considerations and provides the evidences of data collection.

Chapter 4: This chapter presents the findings obtained from the data collection and subsequent analysis in and clear manner. Moreover, it discusses the significance of these findings to the resolution of the research problem and evaluates the practical and theoretical implications for hospitality organizations, especially for HR managers.

Chapter 5: This chapter includes the conclusions drawn from the data analysis and findings regarding the aim and objectives of the study. It also provides with a list of recommendations for HR professionals in the hospitality industry to address the problem of employee retention arising from

work-life imbalance, explains the limitations of the research, the recommendations and further research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. WORK-LIFE BALANCE

2.1.1. WLB concept and evolution

There is extensive literature covering the topic of work-life balance and its implications with employees well-being, which includes WLB. **Zheng et al. (2015)** affirm that employee wellbeing is linked to the individual's ability to manage interface between work and life and organizational WLB policy support. Many academics have aimed to provide with an adequate description of the concept despite its complexity (see **Frame and Hartog, 2003; McDonald et al., 2013; Hobson et al., 2001; Moore, 2007**).

WLB can be defined as the employees capability and/or feeling of fulfilling both work and non-work responsibilities (**Hobson et al., 2001; Moore 2007**). **Frame and Hartog (2003)** describe WLB as a feeling of freedom towards the use of flexible schedules that allows employees to keep a balance between work and personal commitment including family responsibilities, hobbies, studies, etc. However, the concept of WLB remains somewhat ambiguous and confusing due to the complexity of both the work and life spheres. **McDonald et al. (2013)** proposed a more thorough description by affirming that WLB is associated, not only with time management but also with the individuals' socio-cultural aspirations, equity and diversity policies and health and well-being outcomes. Another definition for WLB is that proposed by the *Engaged Performance Model* (**HayGroup, 2001**) which defends the recognition of life cycle needs through the implementation of flexible policies that should be complemented with a supportive environment, a social environment and an income security.

Bearing the prior definitions of WLB, it is assumed that the lack of WLB can have negative repercussions both for the employee and the organization. Although, determining the costs associated with work-life imbalance in an accurate way remains an enormous challenge, some consider these costs significant (**Edgar et al., 2015**).

In this study, WLB will be understood as the employee feeling capable not only of meeting commitments arising from work and life but also feeling free to manage their time to include other activities that contribute to their satisfaction. Achieving WLB, thus, is unlikely without the organization's support - driven by the Human Resources department.

The concept WLB is nothing new. It emerged during the 1970s as a “women’s issue”, when female population became an important percentage of the total workforce but it was not until the late 1980’s that WLB studies started to focus on the development of efficient and effective recruitment and retention strategies (**Frame and Hartog, 2003, p. 386**). From this redirection in academic research, it is not difficult to reach the conclusion that WLB does have an impact on employees’ intentions to leave an organization.

2.1.2. Work and life meanings in WLB

The WLB debate is rich in assumptions and theories. It is key to understand what those are in order to be able to comprehend the impact that WLB has on turnover rates. Therefore, it is not possible to understand what WLB is without defining the concepts “work” and “life”.

Eikhof et al. (2007) wrote a critical reflection on the WLB debate. According to their article, there are a number of premises or assumptions regarding the concepts “work” and “life” within the WLB debate. The first, is that work and life can and should be separated. The second, is that work is seen as negative but necessary activity which is time consuming - the general mindset is that people have too much work. And the third is that the concept “life” is reduced to caring responsibilities. When work interferes with the employees’ lives it means that it becomes a conflict to deal with family responsibilities. They insist, “the common premise is that work-life balance provisions are introduced to help employees reconcile what they want to do (care) with what they have to do (work)” (p.327).

They suggest that if one considers these premises as valid, the intervention point is the working time. Therefore, the discourse that has gained popularity is the one that claims that introducing flexible work policies is an effective mechanism through which WLB can be achieved (**McDonald et al., 2013; Moore, 2007**).

The extant literature on the subject of WLB for the most part tends to reduce the complexity of the concept “life”. That is because work-family balance and work-life balance have been used interchangeably (**Mas-Machuca et al., 2016**) for which it is easily assumed that the only purpose of WLB policies is to simply help employees meet the non-work commitments. Whilst this of course eases the pressure on employees it does not contribute significantly to incrementing their well-being and satisfaction arising from non-commitment activities. This is because the meaning of “life” has been reduced to family commitments and caring responsibilities. On the other hand, work could be

defined as the physical time spent in the workplace dedicated to the fulfillment of work tasks and obligations.

From this definitions of “work” and “life” it is easily comprehensible that it is so difficult nowadays not to fall into a work-life imbalance situation. **Moore (2007)** quoted **Stopper et al. (2003)** who imply that the new 24/7 economic model means that employees have more pressure to work more hours in unsocial schedules. This reduces their time with their family and complicates the fulfillment of the individuals’ responsibilities. Accordingly, many employees assume that productivity - hence, work obligations - should be prioritised over caring responsibilities and lifestyle preferences - or “life” - and that they should put work commitments before their families (**McDonald et al., 2013; Frame and Hartog, 2003; Hughes and Bozielos, 2007** cited in **Lucia-Casademunt et al., 2015**). These assumptions do have a direct impact on WLB policies and its successful implementation which will be explained more in detail in the following section.

In summary, the general debate of WLB understands “work” as time spent at the workplace and does not consider the possibility of the employee actually enjoying it and “life” as a set of obligations generally related with family. However, to this research “work” will describe as the individual’s choice of source for economic resources that can positively contribute to his overall satisfaction and “life” as a compound of responsibilities and activities that enhance the employees happiness and give meaning to their existence - per instance, travelling, sports, art, studies, etc.

2.1.3. Practice gaps in WLB

There is considerable literature that documents that the implementation of WLB policies has not always resulted in employees being able to keep a balance between their professional and personal lives. Having an organizational WLB policy does not necessarily mean that it will be effective or that employees will use it (**Zheng et al., 2015**). A great example to reflect this phenomenon is the results of the survey conducted by **Cousins and Tang’s (2004) quoted by Moore (2007)** suggests that despite the family-friendly and gender-equal policies of Sweden, the Swedish have a harder time maintaining a work-life balance than in other countries. One of the possible cause for this is the existence of a gap between the theory of WLB and the reality.

On the one hand, the popular discourse of part-time and flexible schedules as a form through which alleviating pressures on employees’ is not always aligned with organizational practices - employers continue to be reluctant to such policies (**McDonald et al., 2013**). They also suggest that such

practices might not result in better WLB levels because as their study reveals many employees believe that commitment to work is represented by presenteeism. **Frame and Hartog (2003)** support this theory and state that “time is seen as a commodity, employees who dedicate longer hours are likely to be more valued. Hence, they are regarded as more productive and committed than those who work fewer hours” (p.360). For this reason, some argue the effectivity of flexible policies.

On the other hand, another weakness of WLB practices utilized by many organizations is that they are gendrifed (**Eikhof et al., 2007; McDonald et al., 2013**). Most of these practices - flexible work arrangements, childcare allowances and parental leave policies mainly - tend to target a specific group of the workforce: women. That is because women continue to carry most of childcare responsibilities. In fact, the results of the study conducted by **McDonald et al. (2013)** show that many believe that caring for family members is an individual (and female) responsibility.

Furthermore, the concept “work” has a negative connotation in the WLB debate. However, as **Eikhof et al. (2007)** state “the previous debate fails to capture most varied employee attitudes” (p.328). They also make a point by affirming that the possibility of work being a source of satisfaction and self-fulfillment is usually ignored. Additionally, the concept “life” does not reflect the complexity of the different activities - other than those associated to care responsibilities - that people perform and enjoy during their free time. They conclude “long working hours *per se* cannot be regarded as the main obstacle to work-life balance”.

2.1.4. Benefits of WLB

Many have discussed the positive impact that implementing a WLB policy can have both for the employees and the organization (see for example **Edgar et al., 2015, Mas-Machuca et al., 2016, Mulvaney et al., 2007**) by increasing the productivity and raising the organization’s recognition.

Cuéllar et al. (2015) imply that a company’s competitive advantage rests upon its employees work attitudes and behavior which are highly conditioned by their well-being which can be influenced by WLB initiatives. **Bui et al. (2016)** support their theory by affirming that the organizations that benefit from positive job attitudes are those whose HR practices contribute to their employees’ well-being. In this context, employees adopt a reciprocal attitude and are willing to give more of themselves to their organizations - they are more engaged, committed and satisfied. Therefore, because the implementation of WLB practices can have a positive influence on employees’ well-being, WLB can benefit the organization and help attract talent and improve retention (**Edgar et al., 2015; Mulvaney**

et al., 2007; Deery 2008). This is due to the fact that effective WLB policies help reduce the stress of employees and has a positive impact on employee engagement and on satisfaction.

2.1.4.1. Stress reduction

Stress is one of the key variables that influence WLB. According to **Deery and Jago (2015)**, both physical and emotional stresses contribute to a lack of WLB (p.457). Therefore, it is important to understand its causes and how to manage it in order to avoid the ultimate phase: burnout. Whilst stress is manageable and can be intervened and eased, burnout is unmanageable and it is characterized by a feeling of emptiness and lack of motivation (**Rao, 2016**).

In the article *Innovative tools and techniques to manage your stress to ensure work-life balance*, **Rao (2016)** identifies three types of stress: personal stress, work-related stress and organizational stress. To this study, the last two types are especially relevant. Work-related stress is that caused by high expectations in the workplace and organizational stress relates to that arising from organizational change, uncertainty and complexity.

It is of paramount importance to understand that although stress can be positive - in many cases working under pressure brings out the best of employees and may lead to higher productivity - stress has more negative outcomes than positive (**Rao, 2016**). In fact, stress and burnout can lead to “work life conflict” or work-life imbalance (**Unknown, Managing the talent, 2015**). Accordingly, these stress variables can interfere with employee loyalty and participation in a harmful way (**Soomro et al., 2018**).

2.1.4.2. Employee engagement

Bharwani and Butt (2012) affirm that employee engagement has a correlation with positive organizational outcomes such as customer satisfaction and loyalty, improved return on assets, higher profitability and reduced employee turnover. **HayGroup (2001)** proposes the Engaged Performance Model - whose aim is to boost employee engagement in order to positively impact production - which identifies six core elements that drive employee engagement: Quality of work, WLB, Inspiration values, enabling environment, future growth opportunity, tangible rewards.

2.1.4.3. Job satisfaction

The Job Descriptive Index (JDI) elaborated by **Smith et al. (1969)** cited by **Deery (2008)** identifies the work *per se*, payroll, co-workers, supervision and an overall job satisfaction variable as the key components of job satisfaction. The idea that payroll directly influences job satisfaction is confirmed by **Alonso-Almeida et al. (2016)** who suggest that higher salaries seem to be associated with higher hotel performance. They cite **Alonso-Almeida et al. (2012)** and state that *“more satisfied employees are more compliant with hotel and quality service and, as a consequence, directly influence hotel performance”* (p. 411).

2.2. HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

2.2.1. Introduction to the hospitality industry

The hospitality and tourism industry plays a major role in the global economy. It represents a 10% of the world's GDP and provides one in ten overall jobs worldwide - direct or indirect (**UNWTO, 2017**). Also, it is an industry growing above average - it had a 4% annual growth for seven straight years (**UNWTO, 2017**). **Bharwani and Butt (2012)** claim that globalization has unleashed the economic potential of the industry.

The tourism and hospitality industry is part of the service sector and is compounded by a myriad of sub-sectors representing both weak and strong labor markets (**Baum, 2008**). He also states that the hospitality industry is *“a labour market within which there are fundamental challenges (structural and perceptual) relating to, among other things, the volatile demand cycle (in particular, seasonality), low productivity, high levels of labour turnover, poor remuneration, demanding working conditions and limited opportunities for personal development”* (p. 725). The hospitality industry has also been described as a human-intensive industry in which human resources are basic to service quality (**Baum, 2007 cited in Alonso-Almeida et al., 2016**).

Another differentiating characteristic of the industry is the simultaneity of production and consumption. Service delivery will be always influenced by the human factor due to the relationship employee-customer. Because of that, the most valuable asset for any organization operating in the industry should be people. As a matter of fact, **Bharwani and Butt (2012)** describe it as a “human

resource-centric industry". Paradoxically, both recruitment and retention, especially the second, are one of the most challenging tasks for Human Resources Managers. This is due to the labor intensive nature of the industry, especially when customer service expectations are high (**Christensen Hughes and Rog, 2008**), and the general perceptions of poor working conditions (**Baum, 2015; Bharwani and Butt, 2012; van Rheede et al., 2009**).

2.2.2. Key Challenges for HR managers

2.2.2.1. Recruitment and retention

Barron (2008) suggests that no discussion about hospitality employment is complete without mentioning the concept of turnover. **Van Rheede et al. (2009)** state that the decision to stay or leave (or not start) in hospitality has a direct relation with the characteristics of the industry. Also, the nature of the hospitality industry influences employees' attitudes to be negative towards their jobs, which clearly influences their intention to stay within the organization (**Bui et al., 2016**). Thus, a pressing challenge for HRMs in the hospitality industry is talent attraction and retention, probably because these are indicators that help assess their performance (**Bharwani and Butt, 2012**). **Bharwani and Butt (2012)** also affirm that "the shortage in terms of both quantity and quality of workforce is one of the biggest challenges for HR in the hospitality industry" (p. 153). One of the reasons why it is so difficult to attract talent for HRMs is the poor image of the industry due to the fact that the origin of hospitality work is related to domestic service and associated with servility (**Baum et al., 1997 cited in Bharwani and Butt, 2012**).

The recruitment process becomes a crucial activity for HRMs, not only in practice but especially in the theory behind it. They need to be able to develop strategies and techniques that allow the identification of tangible characteristics of talented individuals (**Scott and Revis, 2008**). However, conducting a successful recruitment process does not necessarily lead to success. HR managers must also be able to manage the talent within the organization in order to retain it. **Scott and Revis (2008)** say that the effective management of organizational talent is a complex process with many issues and functions to be considered to ensure a systematic approach. Accordingly, **Baum (2008)** affirms that there is a need to approach the processes of recruitment, retention and development in a way that the diversity of talents required to ensure the effective organization's performance is recognized.

2.2.2.2. Developing WLB practices

Another key challenge for HRMs is developing WLB practices due to the complexity and characteristics of the industry. Flexible schedules are hard to accommodate for front-line workers and the 24/7 nature of the business and the “face-time” culture make its employees prone to suffering of high stress levels and work-life imbalance (**Zhao and Ghiselli, 2016**). Besides, **Burguess et al. (2007)**, - cited in **Zheng et al. (2015)** - suggest the usage of WLB programmes or initiatives is limited due to individual, societal and organizational reasons. The necessity of designing WLB programmes tailored to each individual’s personal situation (**Zheng et al., 2015**) becomes a brain teaser for HR managers in the industry of people.

2.3. WLB IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Although many have written on the subject of WLB, there is relatively few literature about the WLB situation in the hospitality industry. The ability of employees to maintaining a good WLB, among other things, depends on the characteristics of their jobs and workplace (**Berg et al., 2003 cited in Edgar et al., 2015**). There are numerous factors and elements affecting the WLB of employees within the hospitality industry. The complexity and the service nature of the industry, along with the perceptions - which are in occasions true - make the pursuit of WLB an arduous task. In many cases, the lack of compensation and unsocial hours that have a direct impact on WLB add to the retention challenge in the hospitality industry (**Bharwani and Butt, 2012**).

Deery and Jago (2015) agree that employees in the hospitality industry, especially those working in front line positions, find it particularly difficult to maintain a healthy lifestyle, travel or study. In other words, their job requirements prevent them from maintaining an adequate balance between work and life. **Van Rheede et al., 2009** confirm that the decision to stay or leave (or not start) in hospitality has a direct relation with the characteristics of the industry. Furthermore, **Bui et al. (2016)** suggest that the nature of the industry influences employees’ attitudes to be negative towards their jobs. **Deery and Jago (2015)** also refer to the excessively long hours, style of management and the conflict between work and family as the main barrier to making tourism and hospitality an attractive and stable industry.

Deery (2008), as well as **Mulvaney et al. (2007)** have studied the WLB in the hospitality industry and developed their own frameworks covering the causes and results of work-life conflict for hospitality professionals. Both agree that the long irregular schedules are one of the causes for work-life

imbalance - see figures 1 and 2. **Deery (2008)**, directly relates the lack of WLB with turnover and proposes a series of actions and policies that the organization should undertake to improve retention whereas **Mulvaney et al. (2007)** focus more on the outcomes of work-life conflict.



Figure 1. A framework for improving employee retention rates (**Deery, 2008**)

Mulvaney et al. (2007) highlight the importance of any organization operating in the hospitality industry to achieve strategic advantage by addressing work-life imbalance issues. They consider it an advantage because very few companies have embraced family-friendly approaches to organize the work or used innovative human resources practices to help their employees achieve WLB. It is key, thus, to see WLB policies and initiatives as an investment and not as a liability.

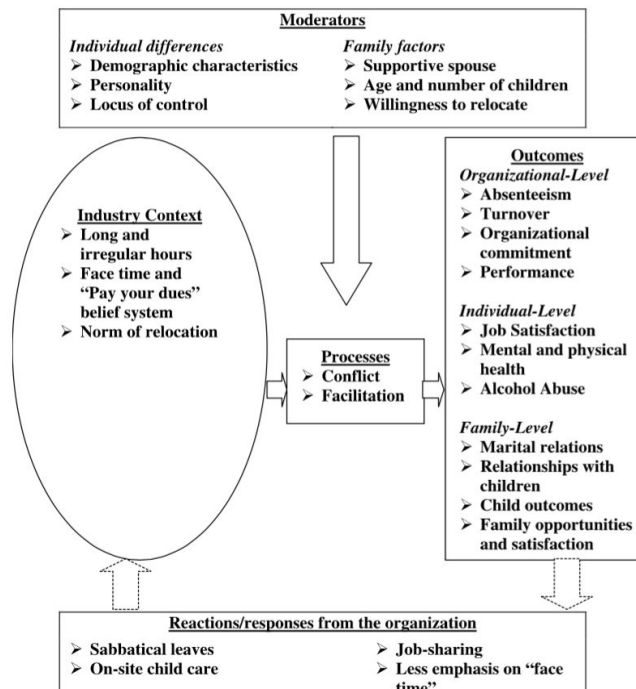


Figure 2. A model of work-family dynamics of hotel managers (**Mulvaney et al., 2007**)

2.4. WLB PRACTICES IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

It is of paramount importance, and also a great challenge, to introduce WLB practices in organizations of the hospitality industry to tackle the problem of retaining talented employees. Although few have treated the subject of WLB specifically in the hospitality industry the literature reviewed has helped this study propose the following good practices:

1. Reduce face-time hours and employee participation in schedule planning

Because the constant exposure and need for employees to be physically present at their jobs they experience a lot of pressure. Reducing to the minimum the employees face-time ratios the organization can ease up a little pressure on them (**Mulvaney et al., 2007**). Besides, given the long, irregular schedules that employees in the hospitality industry have, giving them a say in the planning process of such schedules can certainly help them maintain a better balance.

2. Empower your employees

Autonomy is positively related to employee work-life balance (**Mas-Machuca et al., 2016**). In their study, **Mas-Machuca et al. (2016)** suggest that employees who have autonomy are likely to experience high levels of work-life balance. This suggests that implementing policies such as empowerment provides the employees with a feeling of both freedom - related to WLB - and importance that can boost their satisfaction with their jobs. A great example of a company that has not only introduced empowerment policies but also made it part of their organizational culture is the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company LLC.

3. Encourage supervisor leadership and support of WLB initiatives

If managers are real leaders and support WLB initiatives employees will consider them guides or role models and will imitate them. When managers support WLB policies, it is easier for workers to experience WLB (**Mas-Machuca et al., 2016**). If employees feel close to and supported by their leaders they will feel important for the organization and this will contribute to their job satisfaction. Therefore, managers should approach their employees as unique individuals and treat them accordingly.

4. Avoid temporary and poor quality contracts

According to the study conducted by **Lucia-Casademunt et al. (2015)**, uncertainty avoidance values influence of WLB levels of employees - the influence level depends on their cultural background - in

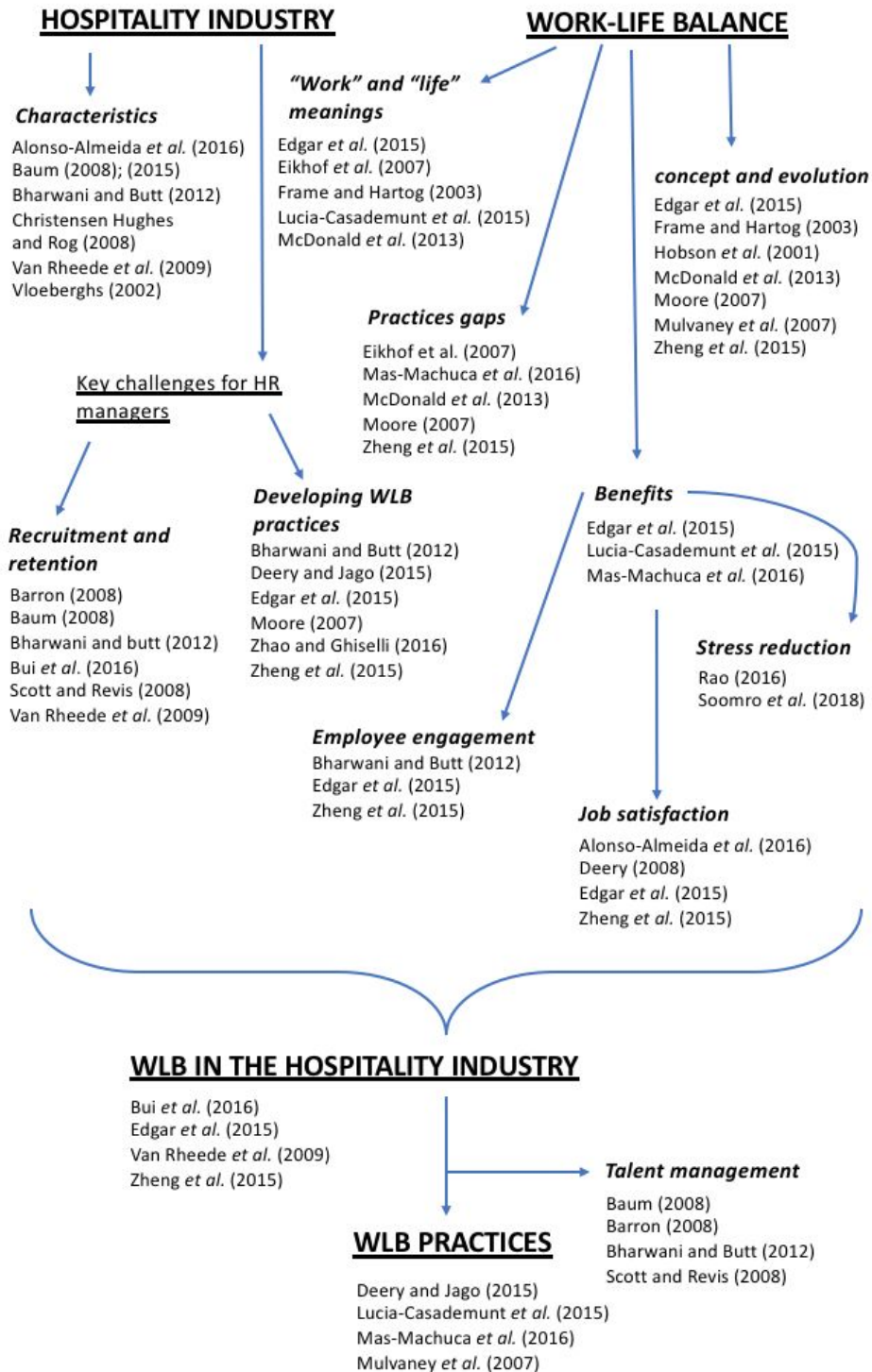
the hospitality industry. One way of correcting this uncertainty as well as project the image of the hospitality industry as one where to do one's career is by providing better quality contracts. If an employee feels that their position in their workplace is safe, he will experience higher levels of WLB. Therefore, it is important to provide the most talented employees with the best conditions.

5. Contribute to employee's well-being

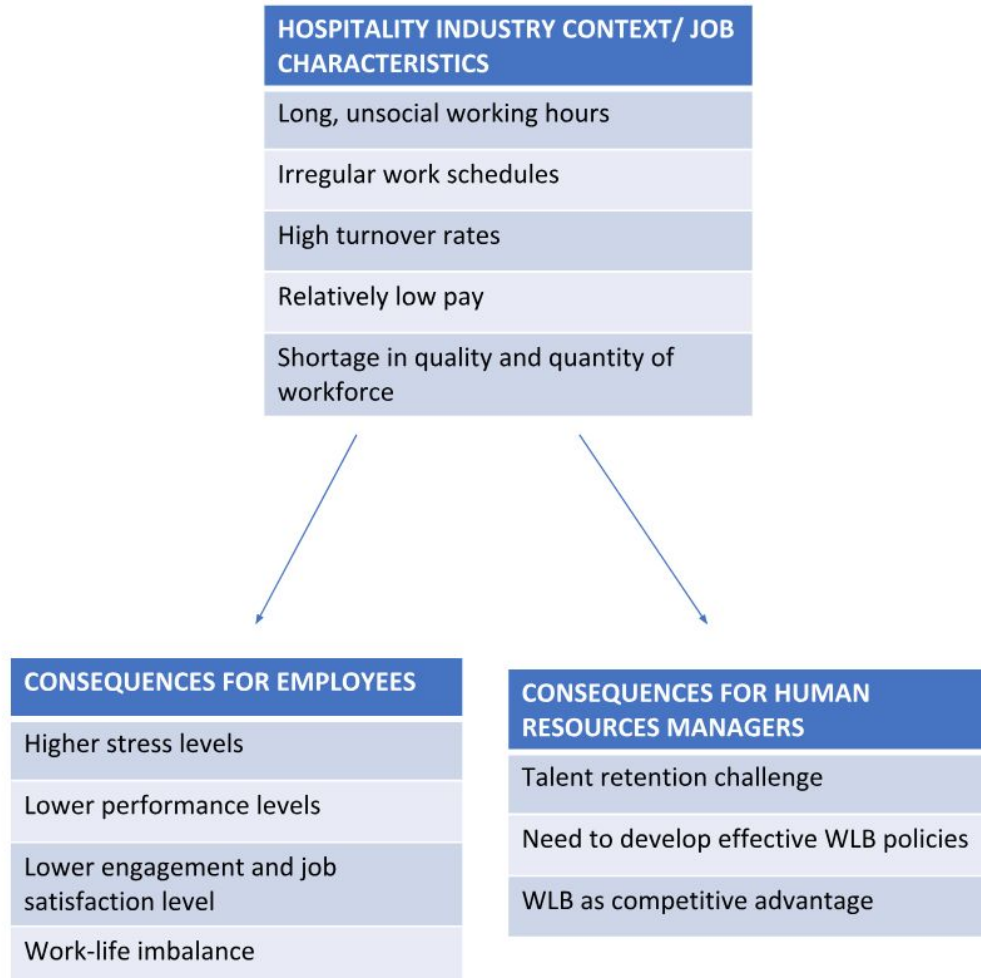
Many agree that employees well-being has a positive impact on WLB (**Deery, 2008; Deery and Jago, 2015; Mulvaney et al., 2017; Mas-Machuca et al., 2016; (Zheng et al., 2015)**). The organization has many ways to contribute to the employee's well-being for example by offering the health care programmes, providing them healthy food at the cafeteria - if there is one - , providing them with discounts to sports centers or the free use of the organization's facilities when possible, the provision of childcare benefits or services, etc.

2.5. LITERATURE MAP

WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND ITS RELATION TO RETENTION IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY



2.6. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. OVERALL RESEARCH DESIGN

This research is an empirical research. **Wilson (2013)** defines the empirical research as the process of testing a hypothesis using experimentation, direct or indirect observation and experience. Furthermore, the research philosophy describes how research should be conducted, and explains how reasoning (theory) and observations (data/ information) are related. According to **Easterby-Smith et al. (2002)**, there are at least three reasons why an understanding of philosophical issues is very useful: first, it can help to clarify the research design; second, it indicates the limitation of the approach; and third, it suggests how to adapt research designs according to the constraints of different subjects of knowledge structures.

In this study, the researchers adopted a phenomenology research philosophy because it emphasises more on statistical approaches using empirical data (**Krishnaswamy et al., 2009**). Thereby, the research conducted is going to add knowledge about actual behaviours in the hospitality industry.

To conduct this empirical research, the researchers have chosen a mixed method approach which is the combination of quantitative and qualitative approach. According to **Johnson et al. (2007)**, “mixed methods research is, generally speaking, an approach to knowledge (theory and practice) that attempts to consider multiple viewpoints, perspectives, positions, and standpoints (always including the standpoints of qualitative and quantitative research)” (p. 113). It is composed by both primary and secondary data collection.

Moreover, the researchers have chosen a deductive approach which is concerned with deducting conclusions from premises or propositions. It is about developing a hypothesis (or hypotheses) based on existing theory, and then designing a research strategy to test the hypothesis (**Wilson, 2010**). In other words, the secondary data collection gives knowledge about the context and the assumptions of the WLB in the Hospitality Industry. It is thus, going to be supported and completed by the primary data collection.

Finally, the type of research of the study is called a survey research. The survey research strategy is closely associated with the deductive approach. Furthermore, **Altinay et al. (2016)** add that “Tourism and hospitality researchers interested in explaining the attitudes, behaviours and

perceptions of consumers, managers, employees and local residents adopt a survey strategy to collect data from and draw inferences for these groups. “ (p.102).

3.2. DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES AND RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The concepts of quantitative and qualitative research approach can be summarized according to the following statement of **Denzin and Lincoln (1994)**: “Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied (...). In contrast, quantitative studies emphasize the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, not processes “(p. 8).

In mixed methods research, investigators use both quantitative and qualitative data because they work to provide the best understanding of a research problem (**Creswell, 1994**).

In fact, collecting, analyzing and integrating both quantitative and qualitative primary data is used to provide a better understanding of the research problem than either of each alone and bring an effective support to respond to the research problem identified above.

The primary data collection is composed by five semi-structured interviews and fifty-five questionnaires. As for the secondary data collection, the literature review (chapter 2) composed of academic articles gives an overview of the research context to the reader and added material in order to support and complete the primary data. The limitation of the secondary data information has to be taken into consideration. In fact, as mentioned in section 1.2. - Identification of the research problem - few authors have researched on the WLB within the hospitality industry and its direct relation to high turnover rates. This, justifies the relevance of the conducted study, but also the weak existent literature and support for the primary data information added by the researchers. The secondary data collection has been carefully selected through online platforms which provide academic papers with the themes exposed in section 2.5. - Literature map.

3.2.1. Questionnaires

While looking for WLB practices which can influence employees’ engagement in the hospitality industry, it is essential to take into consideration the employee’s point of view. The best tool for collecting information from respondents for answering a research question is a questionnaire. **Levent et al. (2016)** precise that “Tourism and hospitality researchers interested in explaining the attitudes, behaviours and perceptions of consumers, managers, employees and local residents adopt

a survey strategy to collect data from and draw inferences for these groups". Moreover, the questionnaire will serve as permanent records of the research in the survey. It is composed by a series of fifteen questions in English and is represented in the Appendix 1 (available at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScO3jJ_sjai7Tm1K3ukzK1YDtToI90sAW6Y5a8WWde968ZgKw/viewform?usp=sf_link), in a fixed and structured order. Moreover, The Appendix 2 provides the lecturer a table of the questions asked in the questionnaire, with the type of question, the information obtained and the research objective associated.

3.2.2. Semi-structured interviews

The research method used in this case will be a semi-structured interview to HR professionals and is applied "face-to-face" with a guide of its progress. **Opdenakker (2006)** affirms that Face-to-face interviews have long been the dominant interview technique in the field of qualitative research. The strengths of semi-structured interviews are that the researcher can prompt and probe deeper into the given situation (**Kajornboon, 2005**). Paradoxically, another important advantage of this method is the flexibility of the support's direction according to the interviewee. In fact, the questions and themes to be covered are roughly the same but may vary from interview to interview according to the answers obtained. Furthermore, the "live" characteristic of the interview allowed further clarification on the moment for a better understanding and thus, a richer response material. An advantage of this synchronous communication is that the answer of the interviewee is more spontaneous, without an extended reflection (**Opdenakker, 2006**). The researchers have recorded the data and/or taken notes on the moment and have transcribed the audio-recording of the conversation while authorized by the interviewee. As opposed to the general thought, the disadvantage of tape recording the interview is the time a transcription of the tape recording consumes (**Opdenakker, 2006**). In the survey, the interviews will serve as permanent records of the research. It is composed of a base of nine questions in English and the questions are transcribed in the Appendix 3.

The types of question can be three: The open question invites the participant to define and describe a situation or facts. There is no way to anticipate the answer of an open question. **Cohen and Crabtree, (2006)** stated that "The inclusion of open-ended questions (...) provide the opportunity for identifying new ways of seeing and understanding the topic at hand". Secondly, the probing question: It is an open question but with a focus or direction. It is a more controlled question. Finally, the specific or closed question is a way of obtaining specific information to confirm a fact or

opinion. The Appendix 4 corresponds to the field and the design of the questions that as been used for the semi-structured interviews in order to answer the research objectives.

3.3. RESEARCH CONTEXT AND PARTICIPANTS

As developed in the research design, the phenomenology research philosophy is adopted and thus evolving and flexible over time. For each research instrument, the sample, its size, its profile and characteristics, and the sampling technique used are explained in the following sections. In the inductive approach, the research is more effective with a small sample, so there is a limit to the sample size (**Levent *et al.*, 2016**).

3.3.1. Questionnaires

The questionnaires have been distributed via mail among tourism universities and the past working places of the researchers and thus has been self-completed electronically from the 19th of March 2018 to the 9th of April 2018. The structure of the questionnaire is developed in the Appendix 1. The researchers used the first five questions (see Appendix 2) to effectuate a sociodemographic classification of the participants. The compulsory requirement for being able to answer was an actual or previous professional experience in the hospitality industry, but there were no particular expectation regarding the age or the sex of the participant.

The sociodemographic questions are asked as additional informations to complete and precise the sample of the population. **Sargeant (2012)** affirms that “The subjects sampled must be able to inform important facets and perspectives related to the phenomenon being studied”. Thus, the volunteer participants which does not match to any of the answers of the first five question were considered as irrelevant for the present study and should not answer the questionnaire as written at its beginning. The sample size of the population analysed was estimated to fifty-five completed questionnaires for its relevance in the study. There has been as many answers as expected.

3.3.2. Semi-structured interviews

The human resources managers' point of view is collected in order to know the different practices exercised in different structures (depending on the country, of the number of dependents, of the policies implemented in the brand, etc). Indeed, the HR managers are essential in the study because they are the best informed about the WLB practices, they are considered as the delegation of

management and the “intermediaries” between manager and employees. They are also in charge of defining and applying the retention policies of the corporate. For developing committed, capable, satisfied, and motivated employees, authors have alluded to appropriate bundles of HRM practices by various names, including high-involvement practices, flexible production systems, high commitment systems, high-performance work systems (HPWS), and best HRM practices (**Wood, 1999**).

The sample size of the population analysed was estimated to at least five semi-structured interviews’ meetings for its relevance to the study. The subject selection in qualitative research is purposeful; participants are selected who can best inform the research questions and enhance understanding of the phenomenon under study (**Sargeant, 2012**). The contact of the participants have been found through the professional online platform LinkedIn and through the past working experiences of the researchers. The interviews have been effectuated between the 23rd of March 2018 and the 27th of April 2018 according to the availability of the interviewees themselves. Again, as for the previous research instrument, the researchers do not point out a particular geographical area or particular hotel characteristics for the HR managers to belong. It was asked no particular professional seniority in the industry, or particular sociodemographic characteristics to be able to confirm the meeting.

3.4. DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of data analysis is to interpret the data and the resulting themes, to facilitate understanding of the phenomenon being studied (**Sargeant, 2012**). This section will provide the lecturer a clear explanation of the techniques applied to analyse both qualitatives and quantitatives data.

3.4.1. Questionnaires

In order to analyse the data obtained from the questionnaires, the researchers have collected the results obtained from the 55 participants on two different frequency tables. They contain the question asked, the possible answers for each, the number of respondents as well as the percentage over total per question. The percentages provide the lecturer a better understanding of the majority’s opinion and facilitate its interpretation when answering the hypothesis.

3.4.2. Semi-structured interviews

The qualitative technique used to analyse the data from the interviews is a coding approach. To codify is to arrange things in a systematic order, to make something part of a system or classification, to categorize (Saldaña, 2009). The researchers have first transcribed the interviews from the records that have been allowed; otherwise, they have used the live-transcription during the interviews.

Saldaña (2009) adds “but how you perceive and interpret what is happening in the data depends on what type of filter covers that lens”. The coding filters used in this research are the five Human Resources’ policies corresponding to the WLB practices developed in the section 2.4. of the literature review (also see Exhibit 3). The key words considered in relation to the practice have been selected from the written transcripts in order to highlight the different opinions of the interviewees about the same practice and the results have been collected in a table.

3.5. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

For both research instruments, the confidentiality of the participants is preserved. Indeed, the participants of the questionnaire could voluntarily add their email address if they wish to, as they voluntarily filled the questionnaire. The participants were also informed about the aim of the study, the identity of the researchers, and the final use of the information they agree to provide before filling the questionnaire (see Appendix 5). About the interviews research instrument, the names and the contact of both the researchers and the supervisor of the project have been precised to the participants previously to the meeting on the information sheet they received were they could also find the purpose of the research with its explanation, why they are invited to participate, and what does it mean to participate as well as a consent form (see Appendix 6 and 7). Furthermore, it was precised on this very same document that the data collected for this study will be protected under the data protection law 15/1999. They additionally receive a guide of the interview to confirm that it is in agreement to the confidentiality policies of the establishment they work for. Finally, all interviewees had to fill and sign a consent form. The three basic elements of informed consent are that it must be (1) competent, (2) knowing, and (3) voluntary (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005).

The research that has been conducted could not be more complete and detailed than using two differents research instruments and using and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data had brought a considerable value to it. Moreover, the small quantity of interviews may be the weakness of the research as the qualitative data relies on five semi-structured interviews. Indeed, the

universality of the data collected is based on a weak diversity of source. However, the researchers believe in the reliability of the data obtained by both research instruments as it has been answered and conducted with diligence. whereas reliability refers to the consistency of the measure, validity focuses on what the test or measurement strategy measures and how well it does so (**Anastasi and Urbina, 1997**). Finally, alternative researchers would reveal similar information for all the reasons mentioned above.

Sampling bias is a tendency to yield one outcome more frequently than others, often as a result of having or showing an unfair tendency to select some people or locations over others. The researchers avoided sampling bias from relying on one particular data source but had instead diversified the canals of participants on a demographic and geographic point of view (age, country, revenue, etc). Has explained above, the questionnaires have been fulfilled on a voluntary basis as for the participation to the interview. Consequently, there is no self-selection with regards to the participants. These codified principles are intended to ensure that researchers consider all potential risks and ethical conflicts when designing and conducting research (**Marczyk et al., 2005**).

3.6. EVIDENCES OF DATA COLLECTION

Every sources of the data and the way it has been collected have been kept. From a one hand, the Appendix 5 shows the number of questionnaires collected and from another hand, all the signed consent forms are available in Appendices with the name and the signature of the interviewees, and the date of the interviews. Finally, for the interviews that had the permission from the interviewees to be voice-recorded, the recordings are available at:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/6m0qkmluf2prh5l/AACUB0ZeywyUcxqCk5R4kZTda?dl=0>.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The following table (Exhibit 1) gathers all the general information of the participants sample- gender, age, and work situation - and provides us with information about their workplace and department.

PARTICIPANTS SAMPLE			
	ANSWER	NUMBER	%
GENDER	Male	18	67.3%
	Female	37	32.7%
AGE	<20	1	1.8%
	20-25	37	67.3%
	25-30	8	14.5%
	>30	9	16.4%
WORK SITUATION	Work	23	41.8%
	Study*	25	45.5%
	Work and study	7	12.7%
WORKPLACE	Restaurant	6	10.8%
	Hotel	40	72.7%
	Other related to the hospitality industry	9	16.4%
TYPE OF POSITION	Front-of-House	32	58.2%
	Back Office	15	27.3%
	Kitchen	8	14.5%

Exhibit 1. Participants sample results of the questionnaire (question 1 to 5)

**These participants were asked to answer the next questions based on their last professional experience*

The results show that there was greater female participation - 67.3% of respondents and that over 80% answered according to work experiences in hotels or restaurants. Besides 58.3% are working, or

worked, in Front-of-House positions. Therefore, the most common profile within the respondents is a female between 20 and 25 years old, working in hotels in Front-of-House positions.

In the table below (Exhibit 2), the number of answers and its percentage over total per question are presented from question 6 to 15.

QUESTIONNAIRE ANSWERS			
Question	Answer	Number of respondents	%
WLB MEANING (QUESTION 6)	Flexibility	36	65.5
	Time for hobbies	36	65.5
	Resting	19	34.5
	Other (<u>Friends&Fam</u>)	1	1.8
GOOD WLB	Yes	36	65.5
	No	19	34.5
WLB INFLUENCES STRESS LEVELS	Yes	54	98.2
	No	1	1.8
COMPANY/MANAGERS PROMOTE WLB	Yes	28	50.9
	No	27	49.1
LAST MINUTE CONSIDERATIONS	Yes	32	58.2
	No	23	41.8
WORKLOAD IN ACCORDANCE TO TIME	Yes	42	76.4
	No	13	23.6
EXTRA HOURS	Never	1	1.8
	Rarely	21	38.2
	Regularly	23	41.8
	Almost every day	10	18.2

EXTRA HOURS REWARDS	I never do extra hours	0	0
	Not rewarded	31	56.4
	Paid	14	25.5
	Time compensation	10	18.2
VALUED WLB POLICIES	Flexibility	46	83.6
	Use of gym facilities	18	32.7
	Healthy food	19	34.5
	Childcare	12	21.8
	Empowerment/rewarding	33	60
	Welfare measures	28	50.9
WORK IN HOSPITALITY IN 10 YEARS TIME	Yes	46	83.6
	No	9	16.4

Exhibit 2. Questionnaire answers results (question 6 to 15)

4.2. QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS' ANALYSIS

The following subsection puts the emphasis on the most significant results withdrawn from the questionnaire divided in five main categories.

4.2.1. Work-life balance meaning for employees

In the results of the questionnaire presented in Exhibit 2, the vast majority of respondents (65.5%) considered that WLB means to have flexibility to attend personal responsibilities and having time to dedicate to oneself (including hobbies, activities and studies among others). Only a 34.5% would include having enough time to rest to the definition of the concept.

4.2.2. Work-life balance situation and relation to stress

In Chapter 2 (2.2.4 Benefits of WLB) it was said that according to **Deery and Jago (2015)** stress contributed to a lack of WLB, thus, stress reduction was identified as one of the most significant

advantages of WLB. Hereof, almost 100% of participants agreed to the statement “I believe that having a good WLB (work-life balance) positively influences my stress levels”.

Although in Chapter 2 it was discussed that many had identified the achievement of WLB in the hospitality industry as a real challenge (**Bharwani and Butt, 2012**), only 19 respondents (35.4%) considered they were undergoing a work-life imbalance situation. In this regard, the reason why the percentage was this low could be the limitation of the number of participants and their variety - 67.3% are in the age range of 20-25.

However, these results do confirm that employees working in front-line positions have it harder to achieve WLB as it was stated by **Deery and Jago (2015)** given that out of these 19 participants only 2 had a Back-of-House position whereas 11 of them reported working in the Front-of-House and 6 in Kitchen. These statistics also help us identify the Kitchen a critical department - 6 out of 8 kitchen employees reported work-life imbalance probably resulting from exhaustion. In fact, whereas Back-of-House and Front-of-House employees suffering for work-life imbalance considered that both having flexibility to attend personal responsibilities and time to dedicate to other activities was the main definition of WLB, 5 out of the 6 Kitchen employees who reported imbalance would include having enough time to rest in the definition of WLB.

The results obtained from questions 9 and 10 of the questionnaire - related to the companies' and managers' influence on WLB were almost even. 50.9% of participants believe that both their company and managers promote and facilitate the achievement of WLB and a 58.2% reported their managers taking into account their personal circumstances when making last-minute changes to their schedules. Bearing in mind that managers can influence WLB levels by supporting and encouraging employees to use WLB policies (**Mas-Machuca et al., 2016**), this results are an alarming sign that many companies are not performing well in terms of WLB policies.

4.2.3. Working hours

One of the characteristics of the industry that were highlighted in Chapter 2 (2.3.1. Introduction to the hospitality industry) were the long working hours. Regarding the results of the questionnaire, although a 76.4% of respondents believed that their workload was in accordance with their working hours 60% of them reported doing extra hours on a regular basis - 18.2% worked extra hours almost every day and 41.8% regularly. In addition, 38.2% of respondents reported that they worked extra hours eventually. However, 56.4% of respondents did not receive any type of compensation for

these extra hours. Another 25.5% and 18.2% were paid for their extra hours or given time compensations respectively. As it was already mentioned in Chapter 2, **Bharwani and Butt (2012)** agreed that the long unsocial hours and the lack of compensation have a direct impact on WLB and it is confirmed by the results of the questionnaire conducted by the researchers.

4.2.4. Most valued WLB policies

One of the main objectives of this research is to provide with a guide of good WLB practices for human resources managers of organizations operating in the hospitality industry. However, the effectiveness of such policies will directly depend on employees' perceptions and preferences over one or another policy.

The results show that a vast majority of respondents - 83.6% - value flexibility. Participants also considered empowerment and rewarding as an effective tool to promote WLB - 60% - and welfare measures - 50.9%. The policies regarding physical well-being - use of gym facilities and healthy food - however, were less important. The less valued policy of the ones proposed in the questionnaire is the one related to healthcare yet it is important to bear in mind the age of the participants which suggests that most of them do not have any children.

4.2.5. Willingness to continue in the hospitality industry

Regarding the willingness of respondents to stay in the hospitality industry in the next 10 years the numbers are incredibly encouraging from a human resources point of view. 86.3% of participants said they were willing to continue to develop their professional careers within the industry. Although the sample of participants of this study was limited in number and variety, this results imply that people who have a vocation for service and hospitality - and thus, are studying or have studied a bachelor's degree, master's degree whatsoever in the field of hospitality - are likely to stay within the industry. This is good news to human resources because if this premise is considered as true, the real challenge lies in differentiating your organization from the rest in terms of WLB which is much more feasible than influencing the employees' overall perception about the industry to induce them to stay.

4.3. INTERVIEWS RESULTS

The main arguments and ideas extracted from each answer have been summarized and organized in a table of contents .

CATEGORY	COLOR	KEY WORDS
<i>Working hours and scheduling</i>	Green	Flexibility, time compensation, (hard, balanced) schedules, extra hours, 24/7, 24h, 365, parental leaves, intensive workdays, service hours, vacations, shifts, weekends
<i>Empowerment/Development</i>	Purple	empowerment, (power of) decision, autonomy / training, courses, learning, coaching
<i>Leadership</i>	Yellow	role of managers/leaders/supervisors/directors, communication with managers, leadership
<i>Type of contracts/work conditions</i>	Blue	uncertainty, part-time, full time, definite, indefinite, collaborators, personnel, hiring, external companies, students, casual labor
<i>Employees' well-being</i>	Pink	exercise, gym, health, healthy, healthy food, mental health, quality of life, sports, nutrition, health/sports programs
<i>Employees' attitudes</i>	Orange	satisfaction, commitment, engagement, motivation, (positive) attitude, loyalty

Exhibit 3. WLB categories, keywords and coding system.

One of the main objectives of the interviews is to find out what are the hospitality companies doing in terms of WLB. To be able to gather and organize the information related to that subject and compare it to the results obtained in the questionnaires, the researchers have created six categories of WLB policies and related subjects - some of which had been identified in section 2.4.2. of the Literature Review - and selected a number of keywords for each of them (see Exhibit 3 above). Also, the researchers have identified and highlighted those keywords in the interview notes and transcriptions according to the code of colors.

4.4. INTERVIEWS RESULTS' ANALYSIS

As well as the questionnaire results' analysis, the analysis of the interview results can also be divided in different fields or subjects.

4.4.1. WLB

Regarding the concept WLB, the experts agreed on several points. They all mention the characteristic of a 24/7 industry and the difficulty to deal with it: "In hospitality, this is difficult as the

hotel is a 24 hours operation and there needs to be someone on duty all the time” stated the expert in interview INT3LON when answering “Do you consider that in the hospitality industry it is more difficult to achieve WLB, why?”. Furthermore, their definition of WLB always mentioned the personal interests, other aspects of life, or even personal life. In interview INT4BAR, the expert suggests the following definition: “The possibility that the company gives you to be able to grow and develop your professional life without having to give in your personal life and development”. Thus, it coincides with the definition of **Hobson et al. (2001) and Moore (2007)** in the section 2.1.1. - WLB concept and evolution. Bearing in mind the characteristics of the hospitality industry, it has been identified that the working hours and the schedules are systematically mentioned when asking to the interviewees why they think it is particularly difficult to achieve WLB in this industry. Highlighted through the green colour-code on the transcriptions, all the interviewees mentioned the “hard schedules”, the need for “flexibility” (INT1BAR), the need for “overtime compensation of any forms” (INT2SAN), seeking to “minimise the amount of extra hours” (INT3LON), among other dispositions. The unanimity of opinions confirm the real challenge the industry faces with the scheduling.

Moreover, the experts listed the positions that they consider have the most difficulty to achieve WLB. The expert in interview INT2SAN believes that the managers and leaders are the positions that have difficulty to achieve WLB because “they take responsibility and need to be physically there”. Also, she added the non-administrative positions and the events department. The experts of interviews INT1BAR, INT3LON and INT5BAR agree with **Deery and Jago (2015)** while saying that the operational positions have more difficulty to achieve WLB. The expert of interview INT3LON completes her answer by stating “as they work different shifts and sometimes long hours”.

The blue colour-code represents the key words about the type of contract and the work conditions according to the Exhibit 3. In the literature review, section 2.4.2, it has been highlighted in a study conducted by **Lucia-Casademunt et al. (2015)** that uncertainty avoidance values influence of WLB levels of employees - the influence level depends on their cultural background - in the hospitality industry. The expert affirms in INT2SAN that, as a human resources professional “we cannot hire more employees because the budget does not allow it”. She also affirms that it is one of the reason why the schedules are sometimes hard to organize. Furthermore, the expert in INT1BAR strengthens this argument by reporting that only an average of 280 employees average are in the company’s fix payroll but that they can have up to 700 people with different contracts working in peak seasons. Indeed, she precises that they employ students, external companies and casual labour that can vary from a month to another. It means that less than 50% of their dependants have an open-ended contract.

4.4.2. WLB and retention

To the questions “Do you believe that a company that has high WLB rates will be more productive?” and “Do you think WLB and retention are related and how?”, the interviewees mentioned several arguments that correspond to the orange colour-code, employees’ attitudes. They all agree positively to both questions.

According to **Bharwani and Butt (2012)**, employee engagement has a correlation with positive organizational outcomes such as customer satisfaction and loyalty, improved return on assets, higher profitability and reduced employee turnover. The expert in INT4BAR affirms that “WLB is one of the most important drivers for employee motivation and it has been proven in numerous studies that motivated employees (happy) are more productive”. Also, he mentioned the words commitment and loyalty and believes that the choice of leaving a company is not only motivated by economic reasons but “once you achieve a certain level of income WLB”. The experts in INT1BAR and INT3LON add that if the employee have time outside of work to focus on his life he would be happier in the workplace; and if someone is happy in a place, he will not considering changing company.

In the description of WLB by **McDonald et al. (2013)**, they affirm that WLB is associated, not only with time management but also with the individuals’ socio-cultural aspirations, equity and diversity policies and health and well-being outcomes. Two experts out of five mentioned the cultural context as a factor that affects WLB, in Barcelona (Spain) and in Santiago (Chile). In INT5BAR, the expert from Barcelona quickly distinguished the hospitality industry in general and in Spain, insisting in the biggest challenge in Spain to establish a good WLB. She pointed out some examples as the lower productivity of Spaniards - compared to North Europe’s people - the difficulty to consider the employee at a holistic level in Spain, and finally, a lack of modern leadership. Furthermore, the second expert in INT2SAN agrees while saying that culturally speaking, the productivity cannot be managed the same way and she insists on the fact that in Chile, the schedules need to be rethought taking into account the importance of breaks and “clear minds”. Finally, she states “culturally speaking, we always leave for tomorrow what can be done today”. Therefore, it is important to consider that WLB should be managed accordingly to the cultural context.

4.4.3. WLB policies

INTERVIEW	CATEGORIES IDENTIFIED IN QUESTION: <i>Which elements of your company's culture positively influence employees' WLB?</i>	CATEGORIES IDENTIFIED IN QUESTION: <i>Which policies do you specifically use to promote WLB?</i>
INT1BAR	Employees' well-being Leadership	Employees' well-being Working hours/ schedules
INT2SAN	Working hours/ schedules Leadership	Empowerment/ development Employees' well-being
INT3LON	Employees' well-being	-
INT4BAR	-	Working hours/ schedules
INT5BAR	Working hours/ schedules Employees attitudes	Working hours/ schedules Empowerment/ development

Exhibit 4. Categories identified by question

The Exhibit 4 gives the reader an overview of the categories of WLB established in the chapter 2 - literature review - identified in the answers of two of the questions asked to the interviewees.

As identified in the previous section 4.4.2 - WLB and retention - the working hours and scheduling are important elements to be taken into account in the company's culture and in the policies to promote WLB. However, the Exhibit 4 evidentiates that the experts mention the importance of a good leadership as an elements of the company's culture to influence positively the employees' WLB; but it does not appear in the policies used to promote WLB of any answer of the interviewees.

Mas-Machuca et al. (2016) confirm the contribution of leadership to WLB: "when managers support WLB policies, it is easier for workers to experience WLB".

Furthermore, the expert in the interview INT5BAR is the only one to mention the employees attitudes' category by insisting on motivating the employees. Finally, the researchers have observed that only three out of the five categories propose as good practices in the literature review - section 2.4.2 - have been identified in the policies specifically use to promote WLB by the experts interviewed: employees' well being, working hours/ schedules, and empowerment/ development.

4.5. DISCUSSION

After having analyzed the results of the questionnaires and the information provided by HR professionals through the interviews, it is necessary to contrast both points of view and to withdraw conclusions in order to achieve the objectives 2, 3 and 4 of this study (see 1.4. - AIM AND OBJECTIVES).

All HR experts interviewed have agreed that achieving WLB in the hospitality industry is more difficult than in other sectors. This, confirms what had been said by **Berg et al. (2003) cited in Edgar et al. (2015)** that the ability of the employees to maintain a good WLB will depend on the characteristics of their jobs and workplace. In fact, the new paradigm of a 24/7 economy and the requirements of a service industry are the main causes for work-life imbalance pointed out by experts, as well as it was confirmed by **Zhao and Ghiselli (2016)** who stated that the 24/7 nature of the hospitality business along with the “face-time” culture make employees prone to suffering of work-life imbalance and high stress levels. However, in the questionnaire results less than the 40% of respondents reported suffering from work-life imbalance.

Nevertheless, the respondents who did report work-life imbalance were mostly employed in Front-of-House positions. This confirms the **Deery and Jago’s theory (2015)** that the requirements of front line positions prevent employees from finding a balance between their work responsibilities and their personal lives. Also, the results of the questionnaire helped identify another department that although does not belong to the Front-of-House also has difficulty to achieve WLB: Kitchen. However, this department was not mentioned by any of the experts interviewed who besides the operational positions listed the events department and managerial positions as vulnerable as the latter.

In regard to the promotion of WLB within hospitality companies, **Zheng et al. (2015)** suggested that the usage of WLB programmes or initiatives is limited due to individual, societal and organizational reasons. Although 2 out of the 3 experts working in hotels said their company’s culture does include WLB and that the other 2 experts agreed that the concept should be included in every organization, the questionnaire results showed that only 50.9% of participants believed that their company and managers were promoting WLB. Also, besides scheduling and wellbeing concepts, almost all experts mentioned the importance of leadership in promoting such initiatives. In that aspect, the questionnaire results showed that 58.2% of respondents felt that their leaders took them into account when making last minute changes to their schedules. Therefore, it is clear that there is a general need for hospitality companies to rethink their organizational strategies and culture in terms of WLB and a need to enhance leaders performance in the promotion of the initiatives.

Finally, regarding the specific WLB policies there is a huge difference between what is being done or experts think should be done - according to the interviews - and what employees actually value. In section 2.4.2. WLB practices, the researchers identified schedule planning, empowerment,

leadership, the quality of contracts and wellbeing as the main five ways to influence WLB. The objective number 2 of the current study is to investigate WLB practices and its results in the hospitality industry. In order to do so, it is necessary to first examine what is currently being done by companies in the hospitality industry. This can be answered by analyzing the interview answers. In that regard, companies have included leadership, wellbeing and schedule management in their culture and the specific policies they use to promote WLB are focused on well-being, schedule management and development (which includes trainings, courses, etc.). However, the questionnaire results show that what employees value most, besides the flexibility which is included in the scheduling category, is not being implemented. These policies are the ones related to empowerment and welfare. In fact, empowering employees promotes their autonomy and according to **Mas-Machuca *et al.* (2016)** employees who have autonomy are likely to experience high levels of work-life balance. Also, the welfare measures such as private insurances or medical discounts help employees feel more protected and safe and at the same time it covers a part of their wellbeing in terms of health.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

5.1. CONCLUSIONS

Over the last years concepts such as employee well-being, satisfaction and engagement and their relation to efficiency and productivity have gained popularity. Some authors, per instance **Deery (2008)**, have argued the relationship that these concepts together with work-life balance have a direct impact on the employee's decision to remain within an organization. This, has in fact been confirmed during the data collection and analysis. However, the results presented in the previous section show that the reality is that in many cases companies fail to implement effective WLB and employees do not always perceive their effects or value them as such.

Considering the research presented in Chapter 2 (Literature Review) and the data analysis, WLB can be defined as the freedom and flexibility experienced by an employee to comply with their work duties and responsibilities without foregoing their personal life and development. Furthermore, organizations should enhance and promote the achievement of this flexibility through the implementation of WLB policies and programs according to their employees' needs. In order to do so, hospitality companies and organizations should consider that:

People who work in Front-of-House and Kitchen are more likely to suffer from work-life imbalance

The employees in front line are usually most affected by the unsocial hours and undergo higher stress levels due to the nature of their jobs. In fact, **Berg et al. (2003) cited in Edgar et al. (2015)** stated that the characteristics of the job itself have a direct impact on WLB.

The extra hours are a significant burden for the hospitality industry

Bharwani and Butt (2012) - who were quoted in Chapter 2 - argue that the lack of compensation for some of the drawbacks of working in the hospitality industry, including the long, unsocial hours, has a direct impact on WLB which at the same time adds to the retention challenge. However, there are tools that a company can use to minimize the consequences arising from it. In fact, **Haygroup (2001)** identified tangible rewards as one of the elements that boost employee engagement and ultimately helps reduce turnover rates.

In conclusion, WLB is a critical aspect which can affect most employees of the hospitality industry and companies should act accordingly. Despite the high turnover rates experienced, the results of the questionnaire showed that the vast majority of the respondents aimed to continue in the industry in the next 10 years. This is good news to the hospitality industry because it shows that

there are people willing to bear with the disadvantages. Thus, the organizations that are able to differentiate themselves through the implementation of effective WLB policies are more likely to experience lower turnover rates. This means, that they are more likely to attract and retain the most talented employees within the industry, who have a stronger decision power over the rest due to their attractiveness for organizations.

The 4th objective of this research is to provide HR Managers with a guide of successful WLB practices that help them retain the most talented employees within the organization. Below, the researchers propose recommendations that besides the ones listed in the Literature Review might help Human Resources managers achieve that WLB advantage.

1. *Include WLB in the company's culture and create a WLB organizational strategy*

It is important that organizations include WLB in their culture and philosophy and that they develop a general strategy that aims to transport the words into actions with tangible results. In a human-intensive industry in which human resources are basic to service quality (**Baum, 2007 cited in Alonso-Almeida et al., 2016**) companies need to treat their employees as the most valuable asset and to ensure their wellbeing. This means, that we need to shift from a results-oriented culture to a people-oriented culture.

2. *Train leaders in the importance of WLB*

It is very important that the leaders of the organization understand and value the importance of WLB to achieve results, be more effective and retain their employees. Therefore, training to develop skills that allow them to act as ambassadors of the organization's culture is key to achieve high WLB levels within the workforce. In fact, when managers support WLB policies, it is easier for workers to experience WLB (**Mas-Machuca et al., 2016**).

3. *Implement WLB policies that are valued by your employees*

The relevance of WLB policies lies not in having them but in having employees enjoy them. It makes no sense to develop a programmes and initiatives that treat the WLB problem but that is not valued by your employees or which does not adapt to their needs. Basically this means to develop and implement relevant and effective policies according to the organizations and employees' situations.

4. *Analyze the cultural context and specifications which affect WLB*

Some of the experts interviewed highlighted the importance of the cultural context in which the organization is developing its activity in relation to WLB. Therefore, companies should analyze and

evaluate the impact that their policies have according to the cultural context and large, multinational corporations should consider applying different strategies according to that.

5. Monitor the levels of WLB

Keeping record and analysis the employees' WLB will help assess the company's performance in terms of WLB and the effectiveness of the policies that are being used. It will allow the company to put special focus on the departments that are more prone to suffer from work-life imbalance and be able to redirect or revert negative trends that affect employee WLB before they reach a burnout situation.

6. Analyze the reasons why employees are working extra hours

Analyzing the causes of employees doing extra hours can help identify areas of improvement in the organizational system of the company which will lead into a decrease of the workload of employees as well as can have positive financial results.

7. Empower employees

According to **Mas-Machuca et al. (2016)**, Autonomy is positively related to employee work-life balance. Empowering employees helps them develop more autonomy and enhances their feeling of relevance and belonging and helps them have a greater WLB level as well as enhances their engagement to the organization.

8. Implement a strong rewarding system

The implementation of a rewarding system will positively influence employees WLB and engagement. Rewards do not need to be economic. A thorough control of employees working hours and the creation of a time piggy bank which can be used to the employees' advantage depending on the company's capacity. Another option can be to establish recognition policies linked to employee performance evaluations which help employees keep their motivation.

5.2. LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Price and Murnan (2004) define a limitation of a study design as "the systematic bias that the researcher did not or could not control and which could inappropriately affect the results". Unfortunately, this research suffers from several limitations as described below. The principal limitation of the research is the small overview of the primary data collection. The research instruments bring material about the employers' and the employees' point of view which lacks to the reader an overall picture of the situation. Moreover, the predetermined time frame and the

timely restrictions of the research had an influence with regards to the depth of the study and may also justify a part of the following limitation.

Another important limitation to consider is the age segmentation of the respondents of the questionnaires. Indeed, 37 persons out of 55 (67,3%) have between 20 and 25 years old and from the 37 persons, 25 (67,5%) are currently studying. Therefore, it is mandatory to consider the background and the experience of the majority of participants. Most of them have probably answered the questionnaire according to their first professional experience as interns.

Finally, two of the interviews have been made in Spanish and therefore had to be translated. The original sense may disperse as for the interpretation of the results. Another language issue is the fluency of the English language required for the research which differed between the two researchers so as the oral and written difficulty faced during the data collection process.

The recommendation the researchers would like to share for the researchers considering a similar topic is principally to take the time to explain the implications, and the contribution to the topic for HRMs. The stakes are high in this topic and the consequences are significant. Secondly, and also a consequence of the timely restrictions is to effectuate a research more in depth by analysing carefully the context of the participants and completing it by the post-implementation of the best practices for the HRMs. The evolution and its analysis could be an example for many other companies and HRMs to follow in order to improve the WLB of the hospitality industry's employees at a greater scale.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. Questionnaire

Work-life balance in the Hospitality Industry and its relation to employee retention

This research is being conducted by Carmen F. Chatman and Joséphine Bourlet as part of a Degree Thesis project for students of HTSI School of Tourism and Hospitality Management. The aim of the study is to provide knowledge on how work-life balance practices can influence employee retention in the hospitality industry and to provide a guide with good practices for Human Resources Managers. You have been chosen to participate as you have worked/ work in a branch of the Hospitality Industry.

The information you give in the questionnaire will be used in the research project and later research publications. Your personal data will be kept strictly confidential. All participants in this study will remain anonymous and information that could lead to the identification of individuals will be concealed within the final report.

By completing and submitting the questionnaire, you are giving consent for the information you provide to be used in the dissertation project and research publications.

Thank you !

*Obligatorio

1. I am* *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Female
 Male

2. My age is *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- <20
 20-25
 25-30
 >30

3. I currently *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Work
 Work and study
 Study (Please, answer the following questions according to your last professional experience)

4. I work in *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- A restaurant
 A hotel
 Other related to the hospitality industry

5. Type of position *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Front-of-house (Front office, F&B service, etc.)
- Back Office (Administrative, marketing, sales, etc.)
- Kitchen

6. To me, work-life balance means (you may select more than one option) *

Selecciona todos los que correspondan.

- Flexibility to attend my personal responsibilities (house work, childcare, family commitments, etc)
- Having time to dedicate to my hobbies, activities, studies, etc.
- Having enough time to rest
- Otro: _____

7. I consider I have a good WLB (work-life balance) *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Yes
- No

8. I believe that having a good WLB (work-life balance) positively influences my stress levels *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Yes
- No

9. I consider that my company and managers promote or facilitate WLB (work-life balance) *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Yes
- No

10. I feel that my managers take into account my personal circumstances (non-work activities, hobbies, responsibilities, etc.) when making last minute changes to my schedules *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Yes
- No

11. My workload is in accordance with my working hours (I have enough time to complete all my tasks) *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Yes
- No

12. I do extra hours *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Never
- Rarely
- Regularly
- Almost everyday

13. I am rewarded for my extra hours *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- I never do extra hours
- I am not rewarded
- I am paid for my extra hours
- Time compensation (my extra hours are deducted from my workdays)
- Otro: _____

14. The WLB policies I value most are (You may choose multiple options) *

Selecciona todos los que correspondan.

- Flexibility (of schedules and/or holidays)
- Use of gym facilities or subscription discounts
- Healthy food and good cafeteria offer
- Childcare benefits and/or services
- Empowerment and/or rewarding
- Welfare measures (private insurance, medical discounts, relatives insurance)
- Otro: _____

15. I see myself working in the hospitality industry in 10 years *

Selecciona todos los que correspondan.

- Yes
- No. Please, explain why below
- Otro: _____

APPENDIX 2. Information provided by questionnaire and its objectives

N° QUESTIONS	TYPE OF QUESTION	INFORMATION OBTAINED	RESEARCH OBJECTIVE ASSOCIATED
1-2-3-4-5	Sociodemographic/ classification questions single-choice questions	Sex, age range, current working situation, place of work (hotel, restaurant, other), and type of position	Sample*
6	multiple choice and open question (other)	To me, work-life balance means	3
7	dichotomous question: yes/no	I consider I have a good WLB	2-3
8	dichotomous question: yes/no	I believe that having a good WLB (work-life balance) positively influences my stress levels	2-4
9	dichotomous question: yes/no	I consider that my company and managers promote or facilitate WLB	2-3-4
10	dichotomous question: yes/no	I feel that my managers take into account my personal circumstances (non-work activities, hobbies, responsibilities, etc.) when making last minute changes to my schedules	2-4
11	dichotomous question: yes/no	My workload is in accordance with my working hours (I have enough time to complete all my tasks)	2 & 4
12	single-choice question	I do extra hours	3
13	single-choice question and open question (how)	I am rewarded for my extra hours	2 & 4
14	Multiple choice and open question (other)	The WLB policies I value most are	3 & 4
15	dichotomous question: yes/no and open question (why not)	I see myself working in the hospitality industry in 10 years	2 & 3 & 4

* **Sample:** information about sociodemographic characteristics on a particular target group (sex, age range, current working/ studying situation, place of work and type of position).

APPENDIX 3. Interview questions

1. How many employees do you have?
2. How would you define WLB?
3. Do you consider that in the hospitality industry it is more difficult to achieve WLB, why?
4. Which are the positions that you consider have the most difficulty?
5. Do you believe that a company that has high WLB rates will be more productive?
6. Do you think WLB and retention are related? How?
7. Which elements of your company's culture influence positively on employee WLB?
8. How do you deal with employees work-life imbalance?
9. Which policies do you specifically use to promote WLB?

APPENDIX 4. Semi-structured interview layout and its objectives

FIELD	TYPE OF QUESTION	QUESTION	OBJECTIVE IN THE RESEARCH CONTEXT
Company information	Specific	-Size of the company: n° approximated of employees	To see if the type of company influences WLB.
General questions about WLB	Open	-How would you define WLB?	To see what HR professionals include in the life sphere and if there are significant differences from one to another. Is there consensus on the meaning?
	Specific/ open	- Do you consider that in the hospitality industry it is more difficult to achieve WLB, and why? -Which are the positions that you consider have the most difficulty?	To confirm that achieving WLB in the hospitality industry is hard due to its unsocial schedules. Find consensus that Front-of-House positions are the most affected.
	Specific	Do you believe that a company that has high WLB rates will be more productive?	To see if all experts agree.
WLB and retention	Specific/ probing	Do you think WLB and retention are related? How?	To find patterns in the answers → productivity, efficiency, employee satisfaction/engagement
WLB policies	Specific	Which elements of your company's culture influence positively on employee WLB?	To see if the company's philosophy and culture take WLB into account.
	Probing	How do you deal with employees' work-life imbalance?	To see if they customize solutions or apply the same policies for everyone.

	Specific/ probing	Which policies do you specifically use to promote WLB?	To see if they use any of the policies proposed in the literature review and look for different ways to promote WLB.
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APPENDIX 5. Screenshot of the pre-questionnaire information

PREGUNTAS RESPUESTAS 55

Work-life balance in the Hospitality Industry and its relation to employee retention

This research is being conducted by Carmen F. Chatman and Joséphine Bourlet as part of a Degree Thesis project for students of HTSI School of Tourism and Hospitality Management. The aim of the study is to provide knowledge on how work-life balance practices can influence employee retention in the hospitality industry and to provide a guide with good practices for Human Resources Managers. You have been chosen to participate as you have worked/ work in a branch of the Hospitality Industry.

The information you give in the questionnaire will be used in the research project and later research publications. Your personal data will be kept strictly confidential. All participants in this study will remain anonymous and information that could lead to the identification of individuals will be concealed within the final report.

By completing and submitting the questionnaire, you are giving consent for the information you provide to be used in the dissertation project and research publications.

Thank you !

APPENDIX 6. Project Information Sheet

INFORMATION SHEET

RESEARCH PROJECT “Work-life Balance in the Hospitality Industry”

This research study is part of a 4th Grade academic subject - Degree Thesis - at the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management Sant Ignasi (University Ramon Llull) undertaken by Josephine Bourlet and Carmen Chatman under the supervision of Itziar Ramirez. The aim of the study is to provide knowledge on how work-life balance practices can influence employee retention in the hospitality industry and to provide a guide with good practices for Human Resources Managers.

It is important that you understand the objectives of the research study and the implications of your participation. Please, read this information sheet carefully and contact us for any doubts.

WHY HAVE I BEEN INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

The section of Data Collection and Analysis for this research project includes interviews to experts in the field of Human Resources in the Hospitality Industry. You have been asked to participate because we believe that your expertise and knowledge can be very valuable for this study.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

Participating in this research project means that you agree to allow us to interview you for no longer than one hour. You are also asked to read this information sheet carefully and to sign the Consent Form below. However, you may decide to terminate your participation at any moment without alleging reasons and to request that the data you provided is not used in the project.

WILL MY PERSONAL DETAILS BE TREATED CONFIDENTIALLY?

The participation in this research study is completely voluntary and all personal details and data collected will be treated anonymously and confidentially for academic purposes and in further publications. The data collected for this study will be protected under the data protection law 15/1999.

WHO DO I NEED TO CONTACT IF I HAVE DOUBTS?

In the event that you had any doubts regarding the research project or your participation in it you may contact:

Researchers: Josephine Bourlet/Carmen Chatman

Emails: josephine.bourlet@htsi.url.edu
carmen.chatman@htsi.url.edu

Supervisor: Itziar Ramírez

Email: itziar.ramirez@htsi.url.edu

APPENDIX 7. Interview Consent Form

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Please, mark and X to confirm:

	YES	NO
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated for the above study.		
I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have answered them satisfactorily.		
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, without my business or legal rights being affected.		
I agree to take part in the above research study.		
I give permission for the interview to be voiced recorded.		
I certify that the information shared with the researchers can be revealed in the study.		
I certify that my personal details will not be revealed for the study and made anonymous.		

Name of Person taking consent

Date

Signature

APPENDIX 8. Ethics Form



ETHICS FORM

It is important that you are sufficiently prepared to collect data doing fieldwork with 'human participants.' Your supervisor will support you in completing the Ethics Form.

The Ethics Form **MUST BE COMPLETED BY YOURSELF AND SIGNED OFF BY YOUR SUPERVISOR BEFORE UNDERTAKING RESEARCH.**

THE SIGNED ETHICS FORM **MUST BE INCLUDED IN THE FINAL UNDERGRADUATE DISSERTATION.**

Risk checklist – Please answer ALL the questions in each of the sections below.

Risk category 1	Yes	No
Use any information OTHER than that which is freely available in the public domain?		x
Involve analysis of pre-existing data which contains sensitive or personal information?		x
Involve direct and/or indirect contact with human participants?	x	
Require consent to conduct?	x	
Require consent to publish?	x	
Have a risk of compromising confidentiality?		x
Have a risk of compromising anonymity?		x
Involve risk to any party, including the researcher?		x
Contain elements which you OR your supervisor are NOT trained to conduct?		x
Risk Category 2		
Require informed consent OTHER than that which is straightforward to obtain to conduct the research?		x

Require informed consent OTHER than that which is straightforward to obtain to publish the research?		x
Require information to be collected and/or provided OTHER than that which is straightforward to obtain?		x
Risk category 3		
Involve participants who are particularly vulnerable?		x
Involve participants who are unable to give informed consent?		x
Involve data collection taking place BEFORE consent form is given?		x
Involve any deliberate cover data collection?		x
Involve risk to the researcher or participants beyond that experienced in everyday life?		x
Cause (or could cause) physical or psychological negative consequences?		x
Use intrusive or invasive procedures?		x
Include a financial incentive to participate in the research?		x

IF APPLICABLE:

List agreed actions with your tutor to be taken to address issues raised in questions Risk Category 2:

- Use of consent forms for interviews
- Protecting the anonymity and confidentiality of participants according to the Data Protection Law 15/1999

Student Declaration: I confirm that I will undertake the Undergraduate Dissertation as detailed above. I understand that I must abide by the terms of this approval and that I

may not make any substantial amendments to the Undergraduate Dissertation without further approval.

Name: Joséphine Bourlet Signed: [REDACTED] Date: 25th June 2018

Name: Carmen Fabiola Chatman Colet Signed: [REDACTED] Date: 25th June 2018

Agreement from the supervisor of the student:

Name: Itziar Ramirez Signed: [REDACTED] Date: 25th June 2018

Risk Category 1: If you answered NO to all the questions, your study is classified as Risk Category 1. In this case:

- The supervisor can give immediate approval for undertaking the field work for the Undergraduate Dissertation.
- A copy of this signed Form MUST be included in the Undergraduate Dissertation.

Risk Category 2: If you answered YES only to questions in Risk Category 1 and/or 2, your study is classified as Risk Category 2. In this case:

- You must meet with your supervisor and clarify how the issues encountered are going to be dealt with before taking off with the field work.
- Once clarified, the actions taken must be stated in the Form. Then the supervisor can guarantee approval for the field work for the Undergraduate Dissertation.
- A copy of this signed Form MUST be included in the Undergraduate Dissertation.

Risk Category 3: If you answered YES to questions included in Risk Category 3, your study is classified as Risk Category 3. In this case:

- You must discuss with your supervisor how to re-direct the research and data collection thesis to avoid risks mentioned in Category 3.
 - You must complete the Ethical Form again until Risk Category 1 or 2 is obtained.
 - A copy of this signed Form MUST be included in the Undergraduate Dissertation.
- A copy of this signed form MUST be included in the Undergraduate Dissertation.

APPENDIX 9. Interview Answers Summary

	INTERVIEW 1	INTERVIEW 2	INTERVIEW 3	INTERVIEW 4	INTERVIEW 5
Size of company	Payroll 280 average. But also, students, external labor (outsourcing). In total 700.	230 employees	270 employees	1 employee + freelancers	1 employee + collaborators
How would you define WLB	The ability or the possibility to combine your work and your personal interest, such as being with your family, having time to do your hobbies, or simply just having time for yourself.	Critical aspect. 24/7 character of the industry. People working in the industry should bear this reality in mind. Very little time to dedicate to oneself.	balance that an individual needs between time allocated for work and other aspects of life.	Possibility that the company gives you to be able to grow and develop your professional life without having to give in you personal life and development.	The balance between professional and personal life of the employee.
Do you consider that in the hospitality industry it is more difficult to achieve WLB, why?	Yes. Hard schedules due to service nature of industry. Also, in events not knowing the ending time. However, not the only industry.	Very important, and necessity to have extra time out of work for mental health. Also, importance of communication with family and boss.	Yes in hospitality this is difficult as the Hotel is a 24 hour operation and there needs to be someone on duty at all times.	Yes. The schedules of an industry which “never sleeps” with long shifts, weekends and holidays (high season)	Cultural factor of productivity (Spain/ North of Europe’s countries). Also 24/7 sector.
Which are the	Operational positions.	Managers/leaders. Because they	Operational, as they work	The ones who have direct	Operational, but also non

<p>positions that you consider have the most difficulty?</p>	<p>Especially events and F&B because they do not have a scheduled system or no covering at end of shift.</p>	<p>take responsibility and need to be physically there. Non-administrative positions. Events department.</p>	<p>different shifts and sometimes long hours.</p>	<p>contact with guests and customers.</p>	<p>operational (depends of the size of the hotel).</p>
<p>Do you believe that a company that has high WLB rates will be more productive ?</p>	<p>Absolutely. People who have WLB are happier, more energetic, motivated and engaged.</p>	<p>Absolutely. I believe long shifts decrease productivity (main cause). There is also a legal aspect involved.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes. WLB is one of the most important drivers for employee motivation</p>	<p>Yes. Partially because of the motivation, but not only material, more at an holistic level.</p>
<p>Which elements of your company's culture influence positively on employee WLB?</p>	<p>Company's philosophy and standards. Employee promise which is about enhancing quality of life. General Managers delivery and important role in believing. Role of leaders.</p>	<p>Promise to employee. The credo. Important role of manager/leader (has to do with organization). Communication is key. The hotels seeks an ideal situation where manager and employee are able to bargain, negotiate, agree on the way to</p>	<p>Last year in October we had a Wellbeing Week. This week consisted of healthy food in our canteen, gym & exercise classes and a staff party to celebrate at the end of the week.</p>	<p>Having a people-oriented culture. Employees are also its "customers"</p>	<p>People are the more important. Good leadership, taking your employees into account. Cultural factor of old leadership in Spain.</p>

		compensate for extra time.			
Do you think WLB and retention are related? How?	Absolutely. When you have WLB you are more satisfied, less stressed, happier and easier to be engaged. If you feel this, you do not look for another place of work.	N/A. Work is not everything and we need to take into consideration mental health.	I believe that WLB and retention are related because if an employee is having time outside of work to focus on their life, they would be more happier in the workplace.	Yes. There is more commitment and loyalty. The choice of leaving a company has not only economic reasons. Once you achieve a certain level of income WLB in most cases is more determinant than the money.	Yes. Human resources are everything in a sector of service. Importance of a constant and lasting motivation (again, not only material or financial). For example by organizing schedules, so more time for children or sport.
How do you deal with employees work-life imbalance?	No standard solution. Planning of specific schedules for students. Flexible entry-finish schedules for recent parents.	Not directly asked. Talks about communication and the importance of manager/leader role.	We try to encourage this by making sure that employees have two days off in a row and try to minimise the amount of extra hours worked.	Sometimes you need to push people to stop their jobs to attend their personal spheres and sometimes it is otherwise. It depends.	Giving responsibilities of team choices(who is going to work with me), schedules. Bigger power of decision.
Which policies do you specifically use to	Take Care Program. Club to do sports together. Private gym classes before shifts. Running	Take Care. Health corporative program. Seeks to provide within work what you	We do not have any	Equilibrated schedules, sometimes refusing business activities and	Percentage of the total benefits returned to the employees as days/ weekend off, trips, ...

promote WLB?	sessions. Create a relationship between departments. Flexible schedules for departments that can have it. Take care of food served in cafeteria.	can not have outside due to the little time left. Tools to help the employee in any area of life.		shortening the service hours.	
Do you offer courses for employees ?	That is the third branch of the Take Care program is training. Not only related to their job. And language courses.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

N/A: Not answered