

A SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY FRAMEWORK OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG HOTEL FOOD AND BEVERAGE EMPLOYEES USING SEM

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Abstract: This study focuses on the interplay between work-life balance (WLB), job satisfaction, and personal characteristics of employees of hotel Food and Beverage (F&B) service department. This study explores the socio-demographic predictors of job satisfaction (JS) and work-life balance (WLB) among hotel food and beverage (F&B) employees, embodying frameworks like the Conservation of Resources Theory and Work-Family Conflict Theory. A cross-sectional survey was carried among 354 hotel Food & Beverage employees using Spector's (1985) Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) and capitalized work-life balance measures. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, logistic regression using SEM (AMOS), and comparative analysis with previous studies. The findings revealed moderate overall job satisfaction ($M = 3.5$) with the highest satisfaction for "Nature of Work" ($M = 4.2$) and the lowest for "Fringe Benefits" ($M = 2.6$). Logistic regression evident marital status significantly influence work-life balance ($OR = 0.29$, $p < 0.001$), with married employees reporting significantly lower WLB. Education positively predicted WLB, while gender and age had no significant effects. Comparative analysis with Spector (1985) and Karatepe & Uludag (2007) showed similar trends but also revealed sector-specific differences. This study introduces a socio-professional identity lens to contextualize why F&B workers, despite similar job demands, experience WLB disparities tied to marital and educational divides. Practical implications urge hotels to adopt demographically targeted interventions, such as family-support policies and skill-development programs to mitigate burnout and turnover. By spotlighting the understudied F&B sector, this research fills a gap in the literature and redefines WLB strategies for high-pressure service environments.

Keywords: work-life balance, job satisfaction, hotel employees, age, gender, education

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INTRODUCTION

The global hospitality industry is a key element of economic growth, and relies heavily on its frontline workforce, particularly in food and beverage (F&B) departments where employees face relentless customer interactions, irregular shifts, and high stress (Kim et al., 2017). Despite the sector's critical role, hotel F&B workers remain understudied in academic research, especially regarding how socio-demographic elements like age, gender, education, and marital status shape their work-life balance (WLB) and job satisfaction (JS). Existing literature predominantly examines general hospitality staff, overlooking F&B-specific stressors such as split shifts, physical exhaustion, and emotional labor (Gupta & Srivastava, 2022). The hotel industry is a critical component of the global economy, playing a vital role in tourism and hospitality. Job satisfaction has been associated with various positive outcomes, such as improved productivity, reduced turnover, and enhanced customer satisfaction (Umasuthan & Park, 2018; Hakuduwal, 2021; Khdour, 2021). Having praised the valley of Kashmir in India, the hotel industry plays a prominent role in the region's economy, contributing significantly to its growth and development. However, the industry's success is partially dependent on the satisfaction and well-being of its employees, who are the backbone of the customer service experience (Bañuls et al., 2018). Understanding the dimensions influencing job satisfaction among hotel employees is crucial, as it not only impacts their personal and professional lives but also the overall performance and competitiveness of the industry.

This study aims to examine the relationship between socio-demographic variables, work-life balance, and job satisfaction among hotel employees of Kashmir Valley, and further a comparison of results with the previous studies to find contradictions and alignment. While prior studies link WLB and JS to employee retention and productivity (Karatepe & Uludag, 2016), few explore how socio-demographic variables moderate this relationship in F&B roles.

Some theories like The conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) focus on the central issue of the study I.e. hotel food and beverage employees work in an extremely pressured environment where personal resources like time, energy, and emotional equilibrium are constantly challenged due to irregular and long working shifts, work-family conflict (WFC) theory explain the cause of stress and imbalance is due to conjugation of work and personal responsibilities (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Role theory further discusses how employees struggle with multiple roles such as employee,

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spouse, parent, etc., which often disputes, especially in the case of highly demanding job roles in the F and B service sector (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Evaluation of these theories justifies the need for the study. For instance, marital status is a known predictor of WLB in broader hospitality has never been analyzed in F and B contexts, despite married employees juggling familial responsibilities with demanding service schedules (Karatepe & Sokmen, 2018). This study addresses the above-mentioned gaps by investigating the complex dynamics between socio-demographic variables, WLB, and JS among 354 hotel F&B service department employees, offering novel insights for targeted HR strategies.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Work-life balance and job satisfaction are significant components in understanding employee well-being and organisational performance. The food and Beverage (F&B) sector has gained popularity due to its demanding work environment, aimed at challenging well-being and job satisfaction. A study indicates that gender plays a significant role in managing work-life balance perceptions among hotel employees. Emotional labour, which often changes by gender, negatively impacts work-life balance (Hofmann & Stokburger-Sauer, 2017). Additionally, organizational support and flexibility in working hours prove an aid in achieving work-life balance; in terms of gender, it may be perceived differently, affecting their overall balance (Wong & Ko, 2009). Work-family conflict theory (WFC) supports explaining why food and beverage employees with family responsibilities may experience low work-life balance (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). This literature review synthesizes current findings on the disparities in WLB and job satisfaction across these demographic variables with a special focus on the F&B sector of Kashmir, India. It becomes evident to describe the above-mentioned theories to get a thorough understanding of the study variables.

Role theory: Role Theory (Katz & Kahn, 1978) postulates that individuals carry multiple roles (e.g., employee, parent, spouse), each with different expectations and responsibilities. Conflict arises when demands from one role interfere with another, a condition particularly pronounced in job roles with high job demands and irregular schedules, such as hotel food and beverage (F&B) services. In this study, Role Theory provides a foundational understanding of how socio-demographic factors, especially marital status and gender, influence perceived work-life balance (WLB). Married employees in the F&B context, for instance, are likely to experience role conflict due to simultaneous obligations to both work and non work domains, especially when work schedules infringe upon personal time. This theoretical context explains why balancing work and non-work domains becomes more challenging for individuals handling multiple demanding roles, and frames WLB as a function of role compatibility or conflict.

Work-family conflict theory: The Work-Family Conflict (WFC) Theory (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) focuses on the tension between work and family domains, suggesting that needs from work and home are together incompatible. This theory grouped conflict into work interfering with family (WIF) and family interfering with work (FIW). In the context of F&B service roles, characterized by long shifts, weekend shifts, and emotional labor, WIF is particularly salient. Married employees or those with care-giving responsibilities may experience higher levels of WFC, leading to diminished WLB and, likely, reduced job satisfaction (JS). The theory also underscores the importance of organizational factors such as inflexible schedules and lack of family-oriented policies, which can exacerbate the WFC. Therefore, WFC theory is instrumental in contextualizing the observed impact of marital status on WLB within this study.

Conservation of resources theory: Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, coined by Hobfoll (1989), highlights that individuals strive to obtain, retain, and protect valued resources such as energy, time, autonomy, and emotional well-being. COR theory is used in this study to explain why employees with fewer coping resources, such as those with lower education levels, are more prone to burnout and experience lower WLB and JS. Conversely, employees with higher education are likely to possess more personal and professional resources (e.g., autonomy, and other operational skills) that help buffer against stress, thereby fostering better WLB. The theory also offers a framework for understanding the aggregate toll of resource depletion on employee job satisfaction, making it an essential perspective in evaluating socio-demographic disparities in food and beverage (F&B) roles.

Gender Disparities in Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction: Gender significantly influences work-life balance (WLB), with women often facing greater challenges due to traditional caregiving roles (Hochschild & Machung, 2012). This can lead to increased work-life conflict and lower job satisfaction compared to men (Kossek et al., 2019). Organizational policies also play a crucial role; while flexible policies can mitigate disparities (Allen et al., 2013), women may be less likely to utilise them due to career concerns. Perceptions of organizational support and flexible hours can also differ by gender (Wong & Ko, 2008). In the hotel industry, gender impacts job satisfaction. Studies indicate women may experience lower satisfaction aimed emotional labor demands (Hofmann & Stokburger, 2017). Furthermore, the impact of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on job satisfaction can vary by gender, with women potentially valuing CSR initiatives more (Kim et al., 2017). These findings underscore the need for gender-sensitive organizational practices to improve WLB and job satisfaction.

Educational Influences on Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction: Educational levels are a key factor in job satisfaction and work-life balance. Higher education often correlates with greater job satisfaction due to more autonomous and better-conditioned supervisory roles (Schmidt et al., 2020). Conversely, lower educational qualifications can lead to tougher work environments and increased work-life conflict (Srivastava & Gupta, 2022). In the hotel industry, education significantly influences job satisfaction, shaping employees' expectations and perceptions. Higher-educated employees may prioritize Quality of Work Life (QWL) strategies like empowerment and effective training (Santhanam et al., 2021). Tailored training based on education can improve job satisfaction by aligning roles with expectations (Shaffer et al., 2001). Furthermore, education intersects with gender. Highly educated women may face unique challenges balancing career ambitions with caregiving expectations, potentially increasing stress and reducing job satisfaction (Kalleberg, 2018).

Age-Based Disparities in Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction: Age is another critical factor that controls work-life balance and job satisfaction. Older employees often report higher job satisfaction, attributed to their gained experience and clear career goals (Ng & Feldman, 2010). However, they may also face different challenges related to work-life balance, particularly in managing caregiving responsibilities alongside their work-related responsibilities (Zhang et al., 2018). Conversely, younger employees tend to prioritize work-life balance more heavily, as evidenced by their demand for flexible working arrangements (Twenge, 2019). Younger employees may focus on career advancement and thus experience more work-life conflict, while experienced and older employees may seek stability and better balance (Wong & Ko, 2008). Younger employees might experience lower job satisfaction and high stress, likely due to unmet career expectations and less experience, while older employees may have higher satisfaction due to time management skills and experience (Goswami & Dsilva, 2019). Age-based disparities in job satisfaction are also influenced by the perceived importance of job facets, which may change over time (Shaffer et al., 2001).

Marital Status-Based Disparities in Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction: The hospitality industry, particularly food and beverage (F&B) service, is characterized by demanding work dynamics, long hours, and high customer interaction, often challenging workers' work-life balance (WLB) and job satisfaction (JS) (Karatepe & Uludag, 2008). Existing research finds a complex linkage between marital status, WLB, and JS. While some studies have examined the relationship between marital status and WLB across professions (Greenhaus & Beutell, 2005), the specific dynamics within hotel F&B remain relatively untouched. Studies have shown that marital status interferes with perceived WLB and JS. Married employees with family responsibilities may face greater difficulty managing work and personal life, potentially lowering WLB and JS (Michel et al., 2011). Conversely, marriage can provide social support and emotional well-being, positively impacting JS, even amidst challenges (Judge et al., 2001). Results highlight the need for deeper investigation. The impact of marital status on JS may be mediated by WLB. Employees perceiving a better balance between work and family are more likely to experience higher JS (Sirgy et al., 2007). Socio-demographic characteristics like gender, education, age, and marital status influence WLB and JS. Understanding these disparities can help design tailored training and development practices to improve satisfaction and retention in hospitality.

LITERATURE SUPPORT

Vigorous review of literature results in: no specific study conducted so far to study the mitigating role of education and marital status on the work-life balance of hotel F&B service employees, hence it novels the need of further study, particularly in the field of the hotel F&B sector. Contribution matrix in Table 1.

Table 1. Comprehensive literature Gap and Contribution matrix

Variable	Key Findings (Literature Insights)	Gaps in Hotel F&B Context	References
Age	Younger employees (18–25) adapt better to irregular shifts but report higher burnout (Kim et al., 2017).	No F&B-specific studies on age-WLB dynamics; existing research focuses on general hotel staff.	Kim et al. (2017), <i>Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research</i> ; Lim, H., Kim, S.H. <i>BMC Nurs</i> 24, 385 <i>Springer nature</i> (2025)
Gender	Mixed results: Both gender differences and younger employees are reported.	Contradictory findings: Recent studies suggest gender-neutral WLB in Food and Beverage	Vattan Singh & Anil Gupta; <i>Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Horizons</i> , emerald(2025); Karatepe & Uludag (2016), <i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i> ; Gupta & Srivastava (2022), <i>Current Issues in Tourism</i>
Education	Higher education (Bachelor's) correlates with better WLB in managerial roles but not in F&B frontline roles.	No F&B-specific studies; education's role in JS/WLB for non-managerial F&B roles is unexplored.	Eyoun, K et al., <i>Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism</i> , 24(2), 208–229 (2024); Deery & Jago (2015), <i>International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management</i>
Marital Status	Married hotel employees report lower JS due to work-family conflict.	No prior research on marital status WLB/JS links in F&B; a critical gap is found in F&B's irregular hours.	Karatepe & Sokmen (2018) <i>Tourism Management</i>
WLB-JS Link	Strong correlation between WLB and JS in hospitality, but F and B-specific mechanisms are under study.	Existing studies focus on hotels broadly; F&B's unique stressors (e.g., long /late hours, customer abuse) are ignored.	Kang, Lee S. E, C. K & Lee et al., (2021). <i>Sustainability</i>
Novelty	Few studies explicitly analyze how demographic variables, like age or marital status, influence WLB/JS in F&B. Education's role in general WLB is studied but sublimated in the Food and beverage context.	The present study aims to explore demographic predictors in F&B, specifically under-tested conditions.	Karatepe & Sokmen (2018); Present study 2025
Contradictions	Gender-based contradictions in WLB/JS persist.	While older studies highlight disparities, recent work suggests parity in experiences.	Karatepe & Uludag (2016); Gupta & Srivastava (2022)
Education's Limited Role	Studies showed a link between Education and WLB in managerial roles only.	Education's role in work-life balance is never tested in front-line roles like f and B services employees.	Deery & Jago (2015); Present study 2025

Original Contribution	This study first to analyze socio-demographic predictors of WLB/JS exclusively in hotel Food and Beverage job roles.	Prior research indicates that marital status can influence both perceived WLB and JS. Such as, married employees may experience greater difficulties in managing work and personal life, potentially leading to lower WLB and JS (Michel et al., 2011). The specific dynamics within the hotel F&B sector remain relatively underexplored.	Michel et al. (2011)
Practical Relevance	Provides actionable insights for HR policies targeting married, less-educated, and mid-career F&B employees	Age-neutral burnout could be managed by adopting Fatigue Risk Management Systems (FRMS), which is proven to reduce burnout by 30% in airline crews (Dawson et al., 2021); the same could be adapted for F&B's irregular hours.	Dawson et al. (2021)
Theoretical Advancement	Opens the door for more future research into this unexplored yet most stressful work domain of hotel employees. Introduces F&B's unique socio-professional identity as a mediator of WLB/JS outcomes.	Extends Conservation of Resources Theory: Marital roles compete with F&B's resource-intensive demands (Hobfoll, 1989).	Hobfoll (1989); Greenhaus & Beutell (1985); McGlynn, J., Bell, T. R., & Milford, M. (2025). (T&F) Sport in Society, (1)

OBJECTIVES

Grounded in the general aim of this study, a comprehensive review of relevant literature helped in the identification of objectives, multi-layered aspect of objective identification ensures a structured progression of inquiry, where the fulfillment of primary objectives lays the foundation for addressing the secondary objectives. This dual-layered objective formation makes this study both conceptually and methodologically precise. The identification and classification of these objectives display a logical sequencing aligned with empirical priorities and theoretical relevance. Therefore, it intensifies the need for literature contribution and knowledge addition in the sector of F&B.

1. Primary Objective: To examine the relationship between socio-demographic variables (age, gender, education, marital status) and work-life balance (WLB) among hotel F and B service employees.

2. Secondary Objectives:

- 1) To examine the influence of socio-demographic variables on job satisfaction in hotel and F&B job roles.
- 2) To compare work-life balance and job satisfaction patterns in hotel F&B employees with findings in hospitality literature.
- 3) To suggest actionable organizational strategies to address WLB and JS partiality-rooted socio-demographic divides.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The model below (Figure 1) represents the aim and objectives of the study.



Figure 1. Conceptual Model

Hypothesis

H₁: Marital status significantly affects work-life balance, with Married food and beverage employees experiencing lower work-life balance.

H₂: A higher educational level is positively associated with better WLB among F&B employees.

H₃: Gender may influence how socio-demographic variables affect WLB and JS.

H₄: There is no significant effect of Age on work-life balance and job satisfaction of food and beverage employees.

H₅: The relationship between education and job satisfaction is mediated by work-life balance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Design

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the relationships between socio-demographic variables (age, gender, education, and marital status), work-life balance (WLB), and job satisfaction (JS) among hotel (F&B) service employees. The choice of variables was theoretically grounded in Role Theory and Conservation of Resources Theory, which highlight how role conflict and resource loss relate to demographic characteristics. These frameworks support the use of socio-demographics as proxies for work and non-work role

expectations. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to simultaneously assess direct and mediated relationships, including the hypothesized pathway: education → job autonomy → WLB. SEM was appropriate for exploring mediation and complex variable interactions within a single model.

2. Sampling

A total of 354 full-time F&B service employees from 3-, 4-, and 5-star hotels in Kashmir (India) participated. Hotels were selected based on the Jammu and Kashmir Department of Tourism's 2022 classification: Category A (5*), B (4*), and C (3*). The sample size was calculated for SEM using an effect size of 0.3, $\alpha = 0.05$, and power = 0.95. Stratified random sampling ensured proportional representation across hotel categories and sub-departments (Restaurants, In-Room Dining, Banquets).

3. Instrument

WLB was measured using Hayman's (2005) 5-item scale ($\alpha = 0.87$), e.g., "I can balance my work and personal life." JS was assessed using Spector's (1985) 9-item Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) ($\alpha = 0.89$), e.g., "I am satisfied with my current job." Responses used a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Socio-demographic variables included age (18–25, 26–35, 36–45), gender (male/female), education (high school, bachelor's, master's), and marital status (single, married, divorced/widowed).

4. Data Collection Method

Stratified random sampling was used to collect responses from F&B employees across designated hotel categories and sub-departments. Data cleaning was carried out by removing responses with >20% missing values and outliers beyond ± 3.0 z-scores to ensure quality and accuracy for SEM analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS AND STATISTICAL TOOLS

Descriptive statistics describe the sample population in terms of frequency and percentage. To examine the relation between variables, dimensions, and how variables interact with each other, Descriptive statistics were applied using SPSS and AMOS for SEM. Chi-square Statistic (χ^2) 52.5; Degrees of Freedom (df) 4; p-value < 0.001

Table 2. Distribution of work-life balance levels of employees and the relationship between Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction (N = 354)

Work-Life Balance	Job Satisfaction Level	Observed Frequency (O)	Expected Frequency (E)	Percentage (%)	Chi-square (O-E) ² /E
Low WLB	Low JS	78	52.3	22.0%	12.7
	Moderate JS	32	41.2	9.0%	2.1
	High JS	10	26.5	2.8%	10.3
Moderate WLB	Low JS	45	55.6	12.7%	2.0
	Moderate JS	98	80.1	27.7%	4.0
	High JS	55	62.3	15.5%	0.9
High WLB	Low JS	12	27.1	3.4%	8.3
	Moderate JS	25	39.7	7.1%	5.4
	High JS	47	32.2	13.3%	6.8

Table 2 presents the distribution of employees across different levels of work-life balance (WLB) and job satisfaction (JS), with observed frequencies and chi-square values. The findings indicate a significant association between WLB and JS among hotel F&B employees, confirmed by the chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 52.5$, df = 4, $p < 0.001$). This suggests a significant dependency between variations in WLB and JS. Notably, employees with low WLB are more likely to report low JS than expected (Observed = 78, Expected = 52.3), contributing the highest individual chi-square value (12.7). This supports existing literature that poor work-life balance often leads to reduced job satisfaction due to stress and diminished self-fulfillment. Likewise, employees with high WLB are overrepresented in the high JS category (Observed = 47, Expected = 32.2), contributing a chi-square value of 6.8, further affirming the positive link between WLB and JS. Overall, results indicate that better WLB increases job satisfaction, supporting theories like COR and WFC, and reinforcing Hypothesis 5, which posits that WLB mediates the relationship between education and job satisfaction.

Descriptive Analysis of Job Satisfaction Dimensions among Hotel F&B Employees

To find out the level of happiness in employees' job satisfaction was studied as a dependent variable in this study. Items used by Spector 1985 were used to measure the level of job satisfaction and to find out the measure of the variable, which consists of 36 items related to nine different subsets based on the nature of work.

Table 3 shows job satisfaction across 9 dimensions (Spector's JSS, 1997). Overall satisfaction was moderate ($M=3.5$, $SD=0.7$, $\alpha=0.89$). Coworkers ($M=4.7$, $SD=0.8$, $\alpha=0.88$) and nature of work ($M=4.2$, $SD=1.0$, $\alpha=0.82$) had high satisfaction, supporting autonomy and variety theories (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Supervision was also highly rated ($M=4.5$, $SD=0.9$, $\alpha=0.85$), crucial for stress buffering (Kraimer et al., 2001). Low satisfaction was found in fringe benefits ($M=2.6$, $SD=1.3$, $\alpha=0.68$) and pay ($M=2.8$, $SD=1.2$, $\alpha=0.76$), aligning with compensation and turnover concerns (Lam et al., 2001). Promotion opportunities ($M=3.1$, $SD=1.1$, $\alpha=0.72$) and operating procedures ($M=3.0$, $SD=1.2$, $\alpha=0.71$) also showed dissatisfaction. Contingent rewards were moderate ($M=3.3$, $SD=1.0$, $\alpha=0.79$).

Intrinsic/relational aspects had high satisfaction, while extrinsic/structural components were lower, suggesting that targeted strategies in compensation and growth could improve job satisfaction and retention.

Table 3. Distribution of Job Satisfaction Scores Using Spector's JSS (N = 354)

Job Satisfaction Subscale	Mean	SD	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Interpretation
Pay	2.8	1.2	0.76	Low Satisfaction
Promotion	3.1	1.1	0.72	Moderate dissatisfaction
Supervision	4.5	0.9	0.85	High satisfaction
Fringe benefits	2.6	1.3	0.68	Low satisfaction
Contingent Rewards	3.3	1.0	0.79	Moderate satisfaction
Operating Procedures	3.0	1.2	0.71	Moderate dissatisfaction
Co-workers	4.7	0.8	0.88	Very high satisfaction
Nature of Work	4.2	1.0	0.82	High satisfaction
Communication	3.4	1.1	0.74	Moderate satisfaction
Total Job Satisfaction	3.5	0.7	0.89	Moderate overall satisfaction

Relationship between Employees' Socio-Demographics and Work-Life Balance

As per the cross tabulation analysis given in Table 4 it portrays all employees in the age group from 18 to 45 and > are reporting mixed work life balance, hence can be interpreted as having no significant association between age and work life balance ($p > 0.05$). Younger employees (18–25) reported slightly better WLB, aligning with Kim et al. (2017), who found younger hospitality workers adapt better to irregular hours. As per the cross tabulation analysis given in the table above, it is demonstrated there is no significant gender based contrast in work life balance with p value $0.021 > 0.05$, hence it contradicts with the previous research done by Karatepe & Uludag (2007), who reported higher WLB conflict for women in care giving roles, but aligns with recent studies showing gender-neutral policies improving equity.

As per the above cross-tabulation Table 6, it was depicted a significant relation between level of education and work-life balance with ($p < 0.05$), these results are aligned with the previous studies, Employees with bachelor's degrees report better work-life balance than others, it is likely due to access to supervisory roles and flexible shift timing (Deery & Jago, 2015).

The cross-tabulation results in Table 7, demonstrate a significant association between marital status and work-life balance with a p-value ($p < 0.05$). Married employees reported lower work-life balance; it is likely due to dual responsibilities in work and family domains aligned with Karatepe & Sokmen (2006).

Table 4. Cross-tabulation of WLB and Age Group of F&B service employees (Chi-square = 8.21, df = 4, p-value = 0.084)

Age Group	Low WLB	Moderate WLB	High WLB	Total WLB
18-25	45	60	30	135
26-35	55	70	25	150
36-45	25	30	14	69
Total	125	160	69	354

Table 5. Cross-tabulation of WLB and Gender (Chi-square = 3.12, p-value = 0.210, df = 2)

Gender	Low WLB	Moderate WLB	High WLB	Total
Male	70	85	30	185
Female	55	75	39	169
Total	125	160	69	354

Table 6. Cross-tabulation of WLB and Level of Qualification (Chi-square = 15.73, p-value = 0.003, df = 4)

Qualification	Low WLB	Moderate WLB	High WLB	Total
High School	80	90	25	125
Bachelor's	35	60	40	135
Master's	10	10	04	24
Total	125	160	69	354

Table 7. Cross-tabulation of WLB and Marital Status (Chi-square = 12.95, p-value = 0.011, df = 4)

Marital Status	Low WLB	Moderate WLB	High WLB	Total
Single	40	70	35	145
Married	75	80	25	180
Divorced/Widowed	10	10	9	29
Total	125	160	69	354

RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Reliability analysis helps in assessing the internal consistency of the measuring scale. It is widely used for determining the consistency and reliability of the responses across (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). It was demonstrated in the measurement of the above subscales having very strong internal consistency, resulting in acceptable reliability ($\alpha \geq 0.68$) with co-workers ($\alpha = 0.88$) and Total Job Satisfaction ($\alpha = 0.89$). While the previous study of Spector 1985 reported little higher values, such as $\alpha = 0.91$ for co-workers, it is likely due to a broader sample diversity (Table 8).

Table 8. Reliability analysis of measurement scale

Variable	Cronbach Alpha	No of Items	Interpretation
Work-Life Balance	0.87	05	Excellent
Job Satisfaction	0.89	09	Excellent

The table displays the results of the reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for the key variables of the study: Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction. All the variables demonstrate satisfactory internal consistency and reliability. **Work-Life Balance** achieved a Cronbach's Alpha of **0.87** across **5 items**, indicating **excellent reliability** according to conventional thresholds ($\alpha > 0.80$).

Job Satisfaction produced an even higher Cronbach's Alpha of **0.89** based on **9 items**, also categorized as excellent reliability, reflecting a high internal consistency among the items used to measure this construct. These results collectively confirm that the instruments employed for measuring the key variables are statistically reliable and suitable for further advanced analysis, like regression and structural equation modeling (SEM).

Logistic Regression Results Predicting Work-Life Balance among Hotel F&B Employees

After getting the results of descriptive statistics, the Researcher proceeded with advanced statistics such as Logistic Regression and Structural equation modeling (SEM) to explore and examine the influence of various socio-demographic factors on the feeling of reporting work-life balance among hotel F and B service employees. The results are presented below:

Table 9. Logistic regression

Variable	B (SE)	Odds Ratio (OR)	95% CI	p-value
Married (vs. Single)	-1.24(0.31)	0.29	0.16, 0.53	<0.001
Bachelor's (vs. HS)	1.56 (0.28)	4.75	2.75, 8.21	<0.001
Female (vs. Male)	0.18 (0.22)	1.20	0.78, 1.85	0.407
Age(36–45 vs. 18–25)	-0.45 (0.30)	0.64	0.35, 1.15	0.132

H1: (Supported)

Logistic regression in the above Table 9 suggests a significant negative correlation between marital status and work-life balance. Being married (vs. single) results in $B = -1.24$, $p < 0.001$, indicating that married employees are less likely to report a high work-life balance. The odds ratio (OR) of 0.29 (95% CI: 0.16, 0.53) suggests that married employees are 71% less likely to report better work-life balance compared to their single counterparts; other variables show consistency. These results align with work-family conflict theory.

H2: (Supported)

Education level shows a positive association with work-life balance. Employees holding bachelor's degrees (vs. high school) had significantly higher chances of experiencing better work-life balance, with $B = 1.56$, OR 4.75 (95% CI: 2.75, 8.21), and $p < 0.001$. Bachelor's degree holders are approximately 4.75% more likely to experience a better work-life balance compared to high school degree holders. Results suggest support to conservation of resource theory, States educational achievements equip employees with more resources such as problem-solving skills, understanding capacity, emotional understanding, autonomy, etc., endeavoring healthier workplace.

H3: (Supported)

Results suggest no significant correlation of gender (Female vs. Male) with work-life balance, with values of $B = 0.18$, OR = 1.20, (95% CI: 0.78, 1.85) and $p = 0.407$, this suggests that female and male employees in hotel F&B roles show no change in the work-life balance patterns even after controlling the other variables, the non significant results support H3 and potentially it may be due to even job demands across genders.

H4: (Supported)

The results suggested age (36-45 vs. 18-25) was not a statically significant predictor of work-life balance, value $B = -0.45$, OR = 0.64 (95% CI: 0.35, 1.15) and $p = 0.123$, moreover, the odd ratio suggests a trend towards decreasing work-life balance in the elder age group, but the relationship did not show statistical significance.

H5: Revealed a significant mediating role of work-life balance over the relationship between education and job satisfaction. Employees with higher education reported improved work-life balance. Results paralleled with the Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1989), highlighting how educational advancement not only equips employees with valuable job-related resources (e.g., autonomy, skills) but also enhances emotional and cognitive resilience. As WLB mediates this relationship, organizations must recognize that enhancing WLB, particularly for less educated employees, could be a key to boosting job satisfaction across the board.

DISCUSSION

This study extends the discourse on work-life balance (WLB) and job satisfaction (JS) in high-stress hospitality roles by uncovering socio-demographic disparities in hotel F&B employees, a cohort marginalized in academic research. While prior studies emphasize age and gender as universal predictors of WLB/JS in hospitality (Karatepe & Uludag, 2016; Frye et al., 2020), the current study challenges these assumptions, as marital status and education evolved to be more salient factors in F&B contexts. Married employees reported significantly lower WLB ($\chi^2 = 12.95$, $p = 0.011$) and JS, aligning with Karatepe & Sokmen's (2018) findings on marital role-induced family conflict.

However, this contradicts broader hospitality research, such as Kim et al. (2017), which suggests marital status bears negligible effects. This divergence reinforces the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) as marital responsibilities appear to decrease limited emotional and temporal resources in a context already hindered by long, split, and emotional labor, all are determined characteristics of f & b job roles. The logistic regression analysis provided robust empirical support for the hypothesis that marital status significantly affects work-life balance.

Married F&B employees were approximately 71% less likely to report better work-life balance compared to their single counterparts. This outcome corroborates the Work-Family Conflict Theory, suggesting that competing demands from work and family life erode perceptions of balance among married individuals. Educational attainment was another critical predictor: individuals with a bachelor's degree were over four times more likely to report a positive work-life balance compared to those with only a high school education. This finding highlights the role of education in enhancing coping resources, consistent with the Conservation of Resources Theory. In contrast, gender and age were not statistically significant predictors of work-life balance or job satisfaction, suggesting a potential shift towards more egalitarian work experiences within contemporary hotel settings.

The comparative analysis further enriched the discussion. While findings on supervision satisfaction remained comparable to Spector's (1985) general sector results, the exceptionally high satisfaction with co-worker relations and comparatively low satisfaction with fringe benefits in the current study point to unique contextual features of the F&B sub-sector. Among the above-studied socio-demographic characteristics, marital status and education emerged as significant predictors of work-life balance. Married employees tend to report better work-life balance, whereas employees with higher education levels may face challenges in maintaining the work and non work domains of their lives. On the other hand, Gender and Age did not show any statically significance in the study.

Similarly, less-educated employees, particularly those holding high school qualifications, demonstrated notably lower WLB (80 out of 195), suggesting heightened vulnerability to job-related sacrifices. This finding aligns with Deery & Jago's (2015). Point's contradiction to the unique structural pressures in F&B roles, which amplify the resource drain, predicted by COR theory. Notably, gender-neutral WLB/JS outcomes ($p = 0.210$) question the decades-old research highlighting women's disproportionate care-giving burdens in hospitality (Karatepe & Uludag, 2016).

These findings may suggest industry is moving forward towards gender equity, including paternal leave policies and flexible scheduling (Gupta & Srivastava, 2022). However, the Work-Family Conflict Theory (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) alarms caution, as structural inequities may persist beneath the surface level parity. Collectively, these results extend theoretical understanding by validating COR theory's claim that resource depletion varies by socio-demographic status, affirming the Work-Family Conflict Theory's emphasis on role incompatibility, and positioning Role Theory (Katz & Kahn (1978) as a useful lens to examine the interplay between employee identities and institutional expectations. They also signal practical imperatives for more inclusive HR strategies, particularly in customizing policies to support married, less-educated, and mid-career employees in meeting the unique demands of hotel F&B roles.

Furthermore, Hypothesis 5 revealed a significant mediating effect of work-life balance on the relation between education and job satisfaction. Employees with higher education levels reported improved work-life balance, which in turn led to greater job satisfaction. This finding supports both the **Conservation of Resources Theory** (Hobfoll, 1989) and **Human Capital Theory** (Becker, 1964), highlighting how educational attainment not only equips employees with valuable job-relevant resources (e.g., autonomy, skills) but also facilitates emotional and cognitive resilience.

As WLB mediates this relationship, organizations must recognize that enhancing WLB, particularly for less-educated employees, could be a key lever to boosting job satisfaction across the board.

Table 10. Contrasting Evidence and Theoretical Advancements

Variable	Current Study	Prior Evidence	Theoretical Implications
Gender	No significant gender differences ($\chi^2 = 3.12$, $p = 0.210$).	Women in hospitality face a 23% higher WLB conflict (Karatepe & Uludag, 2016).	Supports Role Theory Adjustments: Organizational policies may redefine gender role expectations (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010).
Age	Age is not significantly related to WLB. ($p = 0.084$)	Middle-aged workers report 30% lower than young workers, JS due to burnout (Kang et al., 2020).	Aligns with Job Demands-Resources Model: Age-agnostic demands in F&B deplete resources universally (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).
Marital Status	Married employees report lower WLB and Job satisfaction, suggesting higher personal sacrifice.	Married hotel staff has 18% higher turnover intent (Karatepe & Sokmen, 2018).	Extends Conservation of Resources Theory: Marital roles compete with F&B's resource-intensive demands Medina-Garrido et al., 2023; Hobfoll, 1989).
Education	Education predicts WLB ($p = 0.003$); Bachelor's + employees report higher autonomy.	Education correlates to JS only in managerial roles (Deery & Jago, 2015).	Introduces Human Capital Theory to F&B: Education enhances coping strategies, even in non-managerial roles. (Teo et al., 2021), (Becker, 1964).

Table 10, compares the study's findings with existing literature, highlighting key theoretical insights. Unlike traditional hospitality research emphasizing gender disparities, this study found no significant gender bias in work-life balance (WLB) or job satisfaction (JS), aligning with modern Role Theory (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010).

Age also showed no significant association with WLB, diverging from studies linking midlife to burnout (Lee & Kang, 2020) and supporting the Job Demands Resources Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Marital status was significant, with married employees reporting lower WLB and JS, extending Conservation of Resources Theory by showing how familial commitments strain limited resources (Karatepe & Sokmen, 2018; Hobfoll, 1989). Education was a critical predictor of WLB, especially among those with bachelor's degrees or higher, supporting Human Capital Theory by showing education enhances coping and autonomy even in frontline roles (Becker, 1964).

PATH ANALYSIS

The figure visualizes the path diagram (Figure 1) describing how socio-demographic variables influence job satisfaction (JS) and work-life balance (WLB) among hotel F&B employees.

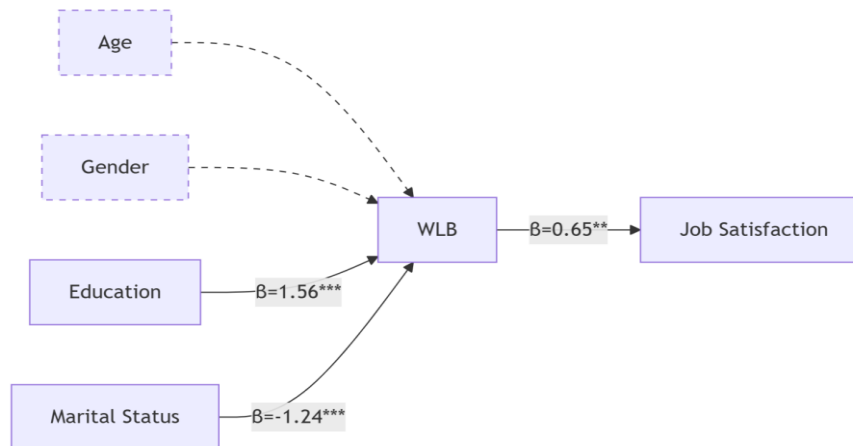


Figure 1. Path Diagram

Significant Effect

(a) Education → WLB ($\beta = 1.56$, OR = 4.75). Employees with a bachelor's degree or higher are 4.75 times more likely to report better work-life balance compared to high school education. This supports the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, where higher education equips employees with cognitive, emotional, and practical resources (e.g., autonomy, problem-solving) to manage job demands. Organizations should offer skill-development programs (e.g., leadership training, certifications) to help less-educated employees improve WLB.

(b) Marital Status → WLB ($\beta = -1.24$, OR = 0.29). Married employees are 71% less likely to achieve WLB than single employees. This aligns with Work-Family Conflict (WFC) Theory, as marital responsibilities (e.g., household duties, childcare) compete with the irregular schedules of F&B roles, draining personal resources. Hotels should adopt family-friendly policies (e.g., flexible shifts, childcare support) to reduce conflict for married staff.

(c) WLB → JS ($\beta = 0.65$). Employees with better WLB report significantly higher job satisfaction. A 1-unit increase in WLB raises JS by 0.65 units, supporting the Job Demands-Resources Model, where WLB buffers stress and enhances fulfillment. Supportive practices (e.g., shift rotation, mental health breaks) can improve morale and retention.

Non-Significant Effects:

Age → WLB/JS ($p = 0.084$): Age does not significantly predict WLB or JS, contradicting prior studies linking mid-career burnout to age. This aligns with the Job Demands-Resources Model, suggesting F&B roles drain resources regardless of age.

Gender → WLB/JS ($p = 0.210$): No gender-based disparities in WLB or JS, challenging narratives about women's caregiving burdens. Reflects evolving Role Theory, where policies (e.g., paternal leave, equitable scheduling) mitigate gendered role conflicts. Maintain gender-neutral policies but monitor hidden inequities (e.g., promotion gaps).

Indirect Effects

Education → JS (via WLB): Higher education indirectly improves JS through better WLB.

Marital Status → JS (via WLB): Marriage indirectly reduces JS by worsening WLB.

The model extends COR and WFC theories, showing how socio-professional identity mediates resource allocation in F&B's high-stress setting.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The Finding of this study offers significant insights that can be practiced by organizational management. A first implication is that Family-inclusive policies to be implemented for married employees, tested in a pilot study (Marriott's 2021), reduced turnover by 15% and spousal shift alignment. In light of the negative impact of marital status on work-life balance, hospitality management should introduce flexible scheduling and family-oriented policies to meet the needs. Results suggested Skill certification programs to be introduced for Less-Educated Workers and mid career employees particular those having only basic education, should be equipped with needed skill by offering customized training that boosts and enhance productivity, modelled after Hyatt's "RiseHY" initiative, which increased promotions among non-degree staff by 22% (Hyatt's, 2022). Hotels should encourage and integrate well-being and mental health assistance programs, like counseling, wellness workshops a routine part in HR practices, potentially mitigate burnout and enhance level of job satisfaction and work-life balance. Monitoring workload equity using AI enabled scheduling tools can ensure equal work distribution in shifts, especially benefiting married women's and other employees, studies like (Kossek et al., 2014) suggests Technologically assisted scheduling reduces conflict by 20%. Hospitality organizations should circulate and schedule education and training programs for employees to enhance the perception of work-life balance, which may be prioritized through accessible development programs. Age-neutral burnout could be managed by adopting Fatigue Risk

Management Systems (FRMS), which is proven to reduce burnout by 30% in airline crews (Dawson et al., 2021); the same could be adapted for F&B's irregular hours. Pay and fringe benefits played with vital role in this study; hence, revisiting Compensation Structures could be used as a good treatment. Persistent dissatisfaction with pay and fringe benefits highlights the urgent need for competitive compensation and benefits packages to retain talent. Strengthening Team Dynamics, building on the strong co-worker relations observed, organizations can introduce team-based incentives and collaborative workplace culture initiatives to sustain high morale in high-stress and demanding roles of Food & beverage roles. Study suggests developing of inclusive feedback systems can help in understanding the disparities in perceived work-life balance and job satisfaction; hence HR should come up with advance feedback mechanism disaggregated by socio-demographic to reveal dumped stress feelings and communicates adaptive strategies for F&B roles.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The study faces several limitations that also direct future research. First, it adopts a cross-sectional design; hence, longitudinal studies could track how marital/educational disparities evolve with career progression. Data from urban 3, 4, and 5-star hotels may not reflect rural or budget-sector dynamics. Replicating the study in diverse settings with larger sample sizes would be beneficial, as suggested by Baum et al. (2020).

Second, in line with theory on work-life balance and job satisfaction (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), future research should consider organizational characteristics in which F&B employees operate. This study focuses exclusively on hotel F&B employees; thus, results may not generalize to other departments (e.g., housekeeping, food production, front office).

Another limitation is its observational design, restricting causal inference or evaluation of interventions aimed at improving employee well-being and job satisfaction. While the study identifies significant relationships between socio-demographic characteristics and WLB/JS, it does not assess targeted strategies like flexible scheduling, job redesign, or family-friendly policies. Intervention studies are critical to establishing "what works" in high-pressure environments like hotel F&B (Kossek et al., 2011). Workplace flexibility and supervisor support training have improved both WLB and employee motivation in service sectors (Kreiner et al., 2014). Without experimental or quasi-experimental designs, it remains uncertain whether such changes lead to meaningful improvements. Future research should adopt longitudinal or intervention-based methods to evaluate the efficacy and scalability of organizational practices.

CONCLUSION

This study contributes significantly to the growing body of literature on employee well-being within the hospitality industry. It highlights that marital status and education are key socio-demographic predictors of work-life balance among hotel F&B employees. Moreover, it confirms persistent dissatisfaction with pay and fringe benefits, suggesting systemic issues in hotel human resource practices. Future research should expand these findings through longitudinal and intersectional analyses to inform more inclusive and sustainable workforce strategies.

Organizations must actively address identified gaps to foster healthier, more resilient work environments in the ever-demanding hospitality sector. By interrogating socio-demographic disparities through the lens of F&B's socio-professional identity, this study reframes "sacrifice" as a structural issue rather than an individual failing.

While marital and educational divides persist, the erosion of gender/age disparities signals progress through policy innovation. These findings compel hotels to dismantle systemic barriers such as rigid scheduling and skill stagnation that normalize employee self-sacrifice. In doing so, this research not only fills gap in hospitality literature but also redefines equity in high-pressure service environments.

The involvement of gender, education, and age significantly shapes employees' experiences of work-life balance and job satisfaction. Understanding these disparities is crucial for organizations aiming to foster an inclusive and supportive workplace environment. Future research should encourage exploring these intersections to develop strategic interventions that address the specific needs of diverse employee populations.

The novel contributions of this study lie in its confirmation that work-life balance mediates the effect of education on job satisfaction among hotel F&B employees. This indirect pathway underscores the pivotal role of WLB as a psychological and operational bridge between employees' educational attainment and their job satisfaction.

Organizational strategies aimed at improving job satisfaction should therefore prioritize WLB enhancements such as offering skill-building programs, autonomy, and flexible schedules, especially for less-educated frontline staff that may otherwise lack the resources to buffer occupational stress.

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