



Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου
University of Cyprus

**The Concept of Work-Life Balance in The Hospitality Industry and its Employee's
Perceptions Towards it.**

By

Barett Kazandjian

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree of Master of Human Resource Management

in the Department of Business

and

Public Administration Faculty of Economics and Management

January 2021

Abstract:

Over the last few years, businesses as well as the public have heightened their interest on the concept of work-life balance. It has become one of the most privately and publicly discussed matters as it touches the daily lives of a vast number of individuals, therefore it has become one of the major concerns for most businesses. In the new era, the line between life and work has become the subject of interest for the society because of the increased pace of work, long working hours and the advancements in technology especially in the hospitality industry. Therefore, dealing with the balance of work and life has become a constant challenge for the society. Since global awareness regarding work-life balance is growing and has received substantial interest from the society, employers increased their attention on the specific concept as they realized it can have numerous benefits on individuals as well as on their businesses. The specific thesis focuses on the importance that work-life balance has on businesses (such as hotels) and the reasons that employers started implementing work-life balance programs and practices. It also investigates employees' perceptions towards the term. In order to achieve this, primary and secondary research was conducted. The primary research was targeted on hotel managers in Cyprus as well as employees of the hotels. The primary research that was collected, widely agrees with previous research, eventually highlighting that work-life balance has various benefits to offer such as increased productivity, reduced family conflicts and more satisfied employees. It was also identified that employees in the hospitality industry found the concept extremely important. Therefore, they desire from hoteliers to invest more on the term.

Keywords: hospitality industry, poor work-life balance, employee's perceptions, effects of work-life balance, outcomes of work-life balance.

Acknowledgements

To begin with, I would like to extend my thanks to numerous people in various countries who have assisted me in completing my dissertation.

Special thanks go to my supervisor, Mrs Daina Nicolaou for assisting and advising me throughout this long and time-consuming process. Without her incredible academic support, the path for completing the thesis would be difficult for me and I would have not managed to finish the thesis without her enduring support. I would also like to thank my supervisor for the precious time that she dedicated not only during working hours, but on various holiday periods as well. Secondly, I would like to thank my family that supported and encouraged me to finish my thesis and give the best that I could. Furthermore, I would like to thank my girlfriend Emily, for pushing me to do the best that I could and providing me the willingness and encouragement to finish my paper. I would not be able to complete the dissertation without having the encouragement and support that was provided to me. Finally, I would like to thank all the participants of my primary research for their effort and time that assisted me in analysing and evaluating their data which assisted me to compare with my literature review.

I confirm that this dissertation is my own work and no part of it has been previously published elsewhere or submitted as part of any other module assessment.

Contents

Abstract:.....	1
Acknowledgements.....	3
Chapter 1: Introduction	7
1.1- Introduction:.....	8
1.2-Research national:.....	10
1.3-Decision upon topic:	11
1.4-Research aim and objectives:.....	11
1.5-Methodology:	12
1.6-Chapters outline:.....	12
Chapter 2: Literature Review	14
2.1-Introduction:	15
2.2-Debates on work-life balance:	17
2.3-Reasons that businesses started supporting work-life balance:	19
2.4-Work life balance in the hospitality industry:.....	21
2.5-Attitudes of employees towards work life balance in the hospitality industry:.....	24
2.6-How did COVID-19 affect the hospitality industry and what strategies can be implemented to minimize the issue:	27
Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Methods.....	30
3.1-Introduction:	31
3.2-Theoretical perspectives and their relationship with methodological approach:	31
3.3-Research methodology and method chosen:.....	33
3.4-Data collection techniques and sampling:	33
3.5-Instrument:.....	34
3.6-Validity, reliability and access issues:	36
3.7-Ethical considerations:.....	36
3.8-The research procedure:.....	37
Chapter 4: Primary Research Findings and Analysis	41
4.1-Introduction:	42
4.2-Analysis	43
Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations	59
5.1-Introduction:	60
5.2-Conclusions:.....	60
5.3-Recommendations:	62
References:	64
Appendices:.....	77

List of tables:

Figure 1: Questions to managers and employees that were related to the objectives of the study ...	38
Figure 2: Questions changed as a result of the process (piloting).....	39
Figure 3: Survey questions for hotel employees changed from piloting process:.....	40
Figure 4: Key themes emerged for objective two.....	43
Figure 5: Key themes emerged for objective three:	47
Figure 6:Correlation among work-life balance and family factors	49
Figure 7: Key themes emerged for objective four	53
Figure 8: Crosstabulation – age group and preference on work-life balance	54
Figure 9: Crosstabulation- age group and importance of work-life balance	54
Figure 10: Age group and consideration of work-life balance.....	55
Figure 11: ANOVA - significance of family to overall happiness	56
Figure 12: Age group and intentions to leave company because of poor work-life balance	57
Figure 13: T- Test likelihood of leaving an organization because of a poor work-life balance.....	58

List of Appendices:

Appendix 1: Tourism growth over the years	77
Appendix 2: Ways to attract employees:	78
Appendix 3: Culture of work-life balance	79
Appendix4: Research Onion	80

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1- Introduction:

The rapid acceleration of developments within the world of business, including the complexity as well as diversity of businesses, has resulted in the escalation of the importance of human resources as it is the most decisive factor for the existence of organizations and their sustainability. Enterprises nowadays, cannot attain their responsibilities effectively without qualified Human Resources who are capable of directing the employees towards the desired aims and objectives that businesses target, but also to discover various ways in which employees can be as effective and efficient as possible and in a manner that ensures survival and continuity of competition. As a result, researchers have heightened their interest in every aspect of Human Resources. Amongst these aspects that are concerned with the labor force, a new concept called “Work-Life Balance” was introduced. Over the last few years, various social factors such as changes of demographic composition within the workforce, the pace of work and the escalation of working hours in the new era which has become a norm, the line between life and work has become the subject of interest for the society (Bataineh, 2019).

Work has changed its role globally because of the demands of the society as well as the constant shifting economic conditions. Previously, “necessity” and “survival” were associated with subjects of work. However, today, instead of being a necessity, work is recognized as an essential contributor to the “personal satisfaction” as well. Therefore, work nowadays has become one of the most crucial factors to provide professional as well as personal satisfaction but also goal attainment which forges the need of work-life balance programs and benefits within organizations. The concept of work life balance has become a main challenge for organizations as there is an increased need to develop the morale of employees, retaining and maintaining them with precious knowledge of the enterprise but also keeping up with the pace of the current trends within the workplace (Tariq et al., 2012).

This is especially valid within the hospitality sector as various studies such as (Osman and Sentosa, 2013) have proved that the hospitality sector has been growing rapidly over the last few years which is also illustrated in appendix one and is currently the fastest developing sector globally. (Presenza et al., 2019) have verified the fact and stated that tourism has grown above average, approximately 4% for the last eight consecutive years and in 2017 there was a growth of 7% over 2016 and tourism growth increased furthermore by 5% in 2018. A forecast of the World Tourism Organisation (2017), revealed the sustainable growth of tourism and studies such as (Claveria et al., 2015), have forecasted tourism demand and verified that tourism will pursue growing over the years (Wan and Song, 2018). Since there is a big numerical increase annually within the tourism industry, and because the hotel industry has a seasonal nature with a high attrition rate per annum, it suffers from serious employee shortages. Very often, employees within the industry are obliged to take additional work and responsibilities that is required from a business so that the job duties can be achieved. The specific work environment can have a negative impact on the work-life balance of the personnel as they do not have enough time for their social and personal commitments (Mohanty, 2014). The flexible and multiskilled workers within the hospitality industry are associated with negative experiences of work for example role overload and involuntary contingent work which have been interrelated with their quality of lives. Therefore, the incompatibility among the non-work domains and the demand from work, increase conflict and consequently results in the employees encountering a poor work-life balance.

Nowadays, that generation Z is entering the workforce, the term “work-life balance” has become a more crucial concept, as the society now gives greater emphasis on the concept and expects work-life balance to be implemented and supported from businesses so that their work and life balance is improved. In the hospitality industry, it seems remarkably significant to improve the quality of work-life balance for employees. According to Hatch and Schultz (2009,

p. 117), compared to a product, whose presentation and quality are rather predictable, “services depend so heavily on the behavior of the employees who deliver them”. As a result, since they often serve as a single point of contact between customers and the respective service organization, service employees’ attitudes and behaviors significantly influence customers’ experiences, evaluations and overall satisfaction levels (Johnson and Ashforth 2008, cited in Buonocore, 2010, p. 378). Therefore, by improving an enterprise’s internal service quality (which can be achieved from work-life balance), will ultimately drive general growth and profits. By supporting the concept, businesses yield better financial results and benefit from an improved bottom-line performance. By being an attractive employer, it can create an important intangible asset, positive employee relations, that differentiates companies in a value-producing way (Tuzunkan and Altintas, 2018). The creation of a great place to work by implementing quality of work life programs may hence be considered the key to competitive advantage in the global environment. Therefore, the importance of the term work-life balance has increased, and employers have augmented their attention towards it in order to minimize the massive issue of the industry which refers to high turnovers and unsatisfied employees.

1.2-Research national:

The aim of the specific research is to provide information on work-life balance and more specifically in the hospitality industry and to understand the perceptions of hospitality employees towards the concept. The specific literature is unspecific and dated. Mixed methods are the alternate methods of data collection in the thesis to collect insights for the reasons why businesses started supporting the concept of work- life balance and the importance that it has to hospitality employees. The specific thesis investigates the reasons why businesses are focusing more on work- life balance and how satisfied are employees in the hospitality industry.

1.3-Decision upon topic:

The increased attention and importance that the concept of "work-life balance" has gained over the years as well as the employee's attitudes towards it, were two main reasons that motivation was augmented to research on the specific topic. Also, because work-life balance has gained momentum and the term has been implemented in most businesses, the fact that a vast number of big businesses and well-known organizations have been supporting the concept, was another factor that increased motivation to investigate the concept further and in more depth.

1.4-Research aim and objectives:

Aim:

To evaluate the reasons that businesses started focusing on work-life balance and what are the employee's attitudes towards it within the hospitality industry.

Objectives:

- 1.** To critically review existing literature on work-life balance, the importance of the concept, whether the concept is supported in the hospitality industry and what are the perceptions of the hospitality employees towards the specific concept.

- 2.** To analyse the reasons why businesses started focusing more on the concept of work-life balance.

3. To investigate the concept of work-life in the hospitality industry.
4. To evaluate the perceptions of hospitality employees on the concept of work-life balance and the importance it has in the industry.
5. To draw conclusions and make recommendations to businesses on how effective the implementation and the support are for both the employees and businesses' brand.

1.5-Methodology:

For the specific study, both qualitative and quantitative data will be conducted, and more specifically semi-structured interviews and questionnaires will be used to gather the primary data from participants. The questions that will be asked during both interviews and questionnaires, is a planned list to collect information to get answers regarding the overall aim and objectives of the paper. The primary research will be accumulated from three hotel managers and 79 employees within specific hotels located in Cyprus. The in-depth and quality of information that interviews can provide was a reason that interviews as a method of collecting data was chosen. Whereas the comparisons that could be made from questionnaires was the main reason in collecting data with both methods.

1.6-Chapters outline:

- **Introduction** – An overview of how the world of business has developed and the importance that the implementation of various strategies implied from the Human

Resource department has received. Also states the decision of the rational chosen as well as clear arranged aim and objectives.

- **Literature Review** – provides information on the concept of work-life balance in businesses and more specifically in the hotel industry. The benefits that the specific concept brings to businesses and employees but also what are the perceptions of hospitality employees towards it.
- **Research Methodology and Methods** - The procedures of the primary research. How the research is conducted is identified and the method chosen is explained.
- **Primary Research Findings** – Information of primary research is illustrated and analysed, and a comparison is made with the secondary research of the literature review chapter.
- **Recommendations and Conclusions** –answers the overall aim of the thesis. Objectives will also be stated and indicated how each objective was achieved. A summary of the main and differences between expectations and actual findings will be highlighted. Finally, areas for further research will be identified.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1-Introduction:

Nowadays, the ways to attract employees and clients within the industry have altered. Generally, organizations have numerous approaches to attract employees such as financial and health benefits that businesses offer as illustrated in appendix two. Since the benefits of tangible products are easy to copy, it can be said that there is a noticeable increase in the significance of intangible resources as well. Therefore, organizations must try and create pleasant conditions through their intangible products, which will attract employees to the business but also make the personnel stay for a long term (Benckendorff et al., 2009). An intangible product which has become a main differentiator for employees, refers to the work- life balance concept. Having said the importance the concept has acquired, managers have increased their interest in the specific concept. since it is one of the main factors that individuals take into consideration when choosing where to work. Employers have started to invest, support and develop a culture of work-life balance at organizational levels as shown in appendix three in order to gain competitive advantage (Bednarska,2013).

The approach of work- life balance firstly appeared back in the 1800's when the working hours for children and women were limited. By 1938, the fair labor standards act initiated a 44 working hour week in order to improve their work-life balance. In the 1980's, the concept became popular when the women's liberation movement imported work-life balance back to the forefront (Raja and Stein, 2014). Maternity leave as well as flexible working schedules were popularized so that women could be accommodated within the workplace. Originally, the specific concept was implemented only for women, shortly the idea and the benefits were broadened to encompass professional women as well as men. The idea of work-life balance has become a key concept in the late 20th century, as the idea of the public needing to have a balance among personal and professional lives increased flexibility in order for them to

maintain a healthy balance amongst the conflicting demands of work and their personal lives (Naithani, 2010).

The term work-life balance has become an imperative issue within modern societies given its relation to the concerns regarding quality of life. Dealing with the balance of work and life, has become a constant challenge for the society (Schonenk, 2018). It is one of the most privately and publicly discussed matters as it touches the daily lives of a vast number of individuals, therefore it has become one of the major concerns for most businesses (Pookaiyaudom, 2015). Thus, over the last few years, the term ‘‘work-life balance’’ has gained momentum within the industry and businesses have heightened their attention in order to establish various policies to implement the term effectively and successfully (Kelliher et al., 2019). There are various aspects regarding work-life balance that have become noticeable for numerous reasons, such as demographic and social changes within the society over the years which have resulted in more females entering the workforce. Another reason refers to various technological advancements such as emails and mobile phones which have made it easier for work demands to intrude into family and personal life. Furthermore, the global competition has increased pressure on businesses and individual employees to be more flexible and responsive to change. Over the last few years, it has clearly been detected an increase in the proportion of employees working long hours in numerous developed countries because of the increased workload, long hours culture and job insecurity (Jones et al., 2013). Even though the notion of work-life balance might be unsophisticated to perceive, there are various debates in literature regarding the specific topic and what terminology must be used to define the term but also about what constitutes ‘‘balance’’ (Kelliher, 2016). The major debate regarding ‘‘balance’’ is that various researchers believe that it is an inferring equal distribution of energy, time as well as commitment to work and non-work roles (Greenhaus, 2003) whereas on the other hand, other researchers have suggested that ‘‘balance’’ refers to situationist which means that balance

depends on the circumstances of each individual separately (Reiter,2007). As Kelliher (2020) has stated, the term work-life balance refers to the relationship among non-work and work characteristics of every person's lives, where accomplishing a satisfactory work life balance is usually understood as restricting one side (usually work), to have additional time for the other. However, such as (Jones et al., 2006. Pp:2) had mentioned, there is a shift towards "work-life integration" rather than balance because "balance" implies to a 50-50 investment which might not be the desired circumstances for many individuals as work- life integration has been defined as " satisfying, healthy and productive life, that includes work, play and love; that integrates a range of life activities with attention to self, personal and spiritual development; and that expresses a person's unique wishes, interests and values. It contrasts with the imbalance of a life dominated by work, focusing on satisfying external requirements at the expense of inner development and in the conflict with a person's true desires" (Jones et al., 2006. Pp:2)

2.2-Debates on work-life balance:

Even though work-life balance provides numerous benefits for both organizations and employees as mentioned previously, there are various debates within the society on how effective and challenging the concept is. Recently, the dilemma for work-life balance has received substantial attention and more specifically concerning to the management of payed work alongside other parts of life, for instance family. In the process of achieving work-life balance through the various policies that businesses offer, researchers believe that there are different disadvantages that come along with the concept for both employees and employers (Lewis et al., 2007).

To start with, employees that strive in office environments, may find it challenging to work at different environments or at different schedules. Employees may find it challenging and

complicated to work as effectively along with telecommuting staff. Teamwork might require advanced coordination as well as planning and communication might be complicated while communicating from different work environments can be more time consuming which is one of the main challenges that employers face. Furthermore, innovation and collaboration among the employees might decrease as well when working remotely in order to improve work life balance (Heathfield, 2019). As the CEO of Yahoo, (Mayer Marissa, 2014) had stated, working together leads to increased innovation and collaboration when the staff are based in the same territory. When employers provide freedom to individuals to work at more suitable schedules in order to suit their needs, some individuals take advantage from flexibility. A main example that was observed refers to the fact that employers might not be as productive because employees might find it difficult to focus on work and not on entertainment or household responsibilities as there might not be a clear dividing line between work and home. It was also stated that productivity can decrease because employees can take advantage of their breaks and the short breaks that the staff are permitted to take, may turn into longer ones (Gragnano, 2020). The distractions and missed collaborations that employees might have while working from home and flexibly, will result in the decrease of concentration on their work which again can minimize efficiency and productivity of employees.

Apart on debating whether the concept is beneficial to organizations and employers after all, there is another grand debate on what exactly "work-life balance" is. There are various researchers which have stated that they do not agree with the definition of work-life balance as stated previously, where work-life balance is an equal balance between personal life and hours of work, because if individuals are striving work-life balance by calculating the number of hours worked per day, they will never be satisfied. Instead, researchers state that work-life balance is a harmonious relationship between personal life and work as they go hand in hand and work-life balance will vary over time. There will be times at work where people need to

put their foot on the pedal and crunch out the hours to deliver and there will be circumstances where the personal life will take more of a priority which is where the flexibility applies (Smith, 2019).

Overall, apart from the striking arguments of the concept and the proper definition the concept requires, the advantages of work-life balance outweigh the disadvantages, especially if the concept is implemented in proper manners and supported from the management which creates a culture of work-life balance. Therefore, the fact that organizations defected their attention to support the concept, will benefit the businesses in the long run to achieve their overall aims and objectives.

2.3-Reasons that businesses started supporting work-life balance:

Managers have initiated progressively approving various Human Resource practices in order to assist employees to harmonize their work and non-work responsibilities so they can have a healthier balance. Since global awareness regarding work-life balance is growing and has received substantial interest from the society, organizations are searching for innovative ways to advance the policies and practices to support the term more efficiently and effectively. Various employer policies that have been observed in numerous organizations to assist employees achieve a higher satisfactory work-life balance, refer to flexible work schedules, flexible leave policies, family-friendly work environments, reduced working hours as well as work from home schemes. By supporting the concept, various advantages can be identified for both organizations and employees (Stavrou and Ierodiakonou, 2015). The specific support from organizations is also referred to as the “work-life balance culture” which is known as a subset of attitudes that relates directly to what extent do businesses support in providing employees the ability to balance their work and personal lives. As mentioned previously, introducing

various employment policies that encourage a culture of a healthier work-life balance, can contribute to real benefits to both businesses and employees as it can improve both the life quality of employees and the effectiveness of the organization.

Managers have started encouraging individuals to take time off from work instead of investing in long hours of work because employees tied up to their work, regularly have symptoms of burnout and stress levels. By finding a balance between work and life, they can reduce negative organizational stress. Therefore, if individuals cannot find enough time for themselves to relax and recharge, then their abilities to complete their everyday tasks decreases which results in a reduction of their performance levels as well (Meenakshi et al, 2013). Also, if organizations illustrate and promote the fact that they pay attention and show consideration to their workers well-being and have a culture of work-life balance, automatically employees will demonstrate higher organizational commitment and loyalty because of the emotional attachment that they will build with the organization (Pradhan et al., 2016). There will be a relationship between work-life balance culture and commitment because if organizations have set of values and beliefs which are supportive of work-life balance and the well-being of their employees, individuals will feel more confident and motivated towards their business. Also, the employees will feel supportive, hence an enhancement on their commitment will be noticeable since enterprises with such policies will be willing to assist individuals to better manage their schedule, which could be seen from employees as empathy and consciousness. This will eventually, result in minimizing absenteeism and on the other hand, improvements in performance will be noticeable at an individual level. Thus, it will have an overall effect on the company as well, because it will be detected that the improved individual performance will result in an increase in productivity at organizational levels. If employees are motivated, then they become more productive and efficient (MacDonald, 2005). Minimizing the issue of absenteeism, means that organizations will manage to retain their staff since with a proper well-

maintained work-life balance will satisfy employees and with self/work satisfied employees, organizations can easily retain their staff. Eventually, this will result in minimizing the cost of advertising, recruiting, as well as training new employees but also the time that will be saved in order to hire and train new employees. It is crucial for organizations to keep their employees motivated because apart from minimizing their turnover and increase their performance, it also achieves a competitive advantage through the development of the organizational commitment (Farivar et al., 2016). Competitive advantage can be achieved since the businesses that provide a culture of work-life balance, will be recognized as a business that individuals want to work for, since it is one of the main factors that individuals consider when choosing work. Competitiveness can also be boosted by meeting seasonal picks of the businesses by implying various practices such as job sharing or part time work. Another aspect that could also result in gaining competitive advantage is by reacting to market change conditions more effectively and meeting customer demands for example by flextime and shift works that can assist businesses in opening longer hours without making employees work long hours (Huang et al., 2016). Apart from increase in productivity levels, employees will improve their quality of work when work-life balance is improved. Since work-life balanced will be managed, employees will not have to worry about other matters which will make them more concentrated on their work which eventually will result in job satisfaction. Furthermore, the satisfaction that the employees will have, will act as a motivator within the organizations. This can have a positive impact on collaboration which will enable the employees to work better as a group and develop their skills but also adopt new techniques and skills (Betaineh, 2019).

2.4-Work life balance in the hospitality industry:

Within the hospitality industry, the work- life balance is even more crucial since the concept is the most important and frequent problem within the specific industry. The reason is because

the specific industry has a labor-intensive environment which operates 365 days annually and around the clock and very often requires working hours that exceed the standard full time 40 hour per week. Working in such business environments can often be problematic since employees must deal with an exploitative, stressful and precarious work environment, long and anti-social working hours which are very demanding workload shift duties, with a low salary and a poor social status all of which prevent the employees from balancing family duties, work and other necessities for their own well-being (Fotiadis et al., 2019). Therefore, such working environments make it difficult for the employees to achieve a satisfactory work-life balance. Because of an unbalanced work and life, hospitality employees are undoubtably at a higher risk in comparison to other workers to become alcohol and other substance addicts which was also confirmed by (Berry et al., 2007) through their alcohol use and abuse study. They mentioned that this happens because of the workplace culture, unstable working hours, low emotional support, customer interactions as well as the high stress levels that workers in the hospitality industry face which are all results from poor-work life balance features in the industry.

A current research revealed that most employees working in the hospitality sector have lack of work-life balance since they undertake long working hours. This is a crucial problem for the hospitality industry as the long hours of work leads to burnout and stress which very frequently drives to substance use. The poor work-life balance is a main challenge that the industry specialists are faced with, since the majority of hotels do not support the overall concept and therefore the systems and programs are not consistently present within the hospitality industry resulting in a poor work life balance (Kaya and Karatepe, 2020). It is also of high importance to highlight the fact that the shifts and work timing is a major challenge for the employees as the fundamental business is higher during festivals and holidays where most individuals venture out to enjoy, for example summer and Christmas. For employees within the hospitality industry, these are the busiest periods thus it becomes impractical for the

personnel to avail any leave or time offs during those busy periods. This naturally and automatically creates a work-life imbalance and family conflicts as various needs and expectations from family and friends are neglected. Therefore, over the years, the hospitality industry has faced an issue that led to it being characterized as an industry of a turnover culture (Biswakarma et al., 2015). Various researchers have illustrated that front-line workers in the hospitality industry face a worst work-life balance in comparison to other workers because of their job related responsibilities. The increased stress and exhaustion faced from front-line employees due to irregular work schedules, heavy workloads and long working hours, all increased the employee's intentions to leave the industry (Karatepe and Uludag, 2007). Numerous researchers have reached to the conclusion that conflicts between family and work could be a reason that influences the decision making of an employee to remain or leave a corporation. In examining the intentions of employees for leaving the organization, (Delfgaauws, 2007) had reached to the same conclusion after his studies had revealed that the variable "work vs private life" was important in determining the predictors of employees leaving a hotel and the hospitality industry. The researcher also confirmed the fact that there is high turnover rate within the hospitality industry by stating that the desire to have a "pleasant lifestyle" is an important factor for employees in such businesses (Deery and Jago, 2009).

Individuals find it difficult to work in different roles or even multiple roles which leads to stress (Grandey and Cropanzano, 1999). The subsequent stress that hospitality employees experience is associated to family and work conflicts (Wong & Ko, 2009). The matter of work-life balance has received much attention, and the various participants in different industries are gradually becoming aware of practices for balancing work and life (Wong & Ko, 2009). It can be particularly challenging to accomplish work-life balance in industries where difficult, unusual schedules and non-traditional hours are the norm. Hospitality has historically been one such industry (Mhanty and Mohanty, 2014).

Lowe (2007) had stated that meeting of stimulating trends in the early 21st century has enabled employers to re-think their human resources strategies. The priority for the hospitality industry was not on improving their policies and strategies to develop their work-life balance concept, but on the challenges and trends the industry faced such as the aging workforce, advancements in information technology, the rising costs associated with employee benefits, the changing wants and needs of customers and the increased labor market competition. All these issues and trends have resulted in creating new frontiers (boundaries) for employers to achieve the organizational objectives and haven't focused much on employees' personal aspirations. As reported and determined in The Human Solutions Report (Lowe, 2007), a big number of employees suffer from a depressed and imbalanced work-life quality. It was also reported that dual-earner families have escalated over the course of time while the job performance expectations have also increased. Thus, work-life balance has become both a mission to achieve and a dream for families.

2.5-Attitudes of employees towards work life balance in the hospitality industry:

Within the hospitality industry, the prevalence of burnout for employees is higher in comparison to the other industries. Since the hospitality industry lacks work-life balance, it is observed a correlation of high burnout to high turnover. Due to the work overload, tough work environment and long working hours, employees from all organizational levels are not satisfied with their work-life balance (Wong and Ko, 2009). Various researches such as (O'Connor, 2003), found that the number one personal challenge of employees within the hospitality industry is related with work-life balance. It has been found that, most of the employees within the specific industry, struggle in the procedure to strike for a work-life balance.

Due to the nature of hotel work, employees have less decision power on setting their own working time which is something that employees would like to change. Employees especially millennials and generation Z that prioritize work-life balance, have negative experiences in relation to hotel work environments and conditions. A survey that was undertaken from 1000 participants by Luo (2014), indicated that 80% of the younger generations within the hotel industry are preparing for a new job that provides and supports work-life balance policies and practices in order to improve their life quality. This illustrates that the employee's perceptions on the minimal policies which numerous businesses might provide is not enough to satisfy the employees since they are not happy with the work-life balance that they have. An example could refer to a quote that numerous employees have stated which refers to " a hotel operates 24/7, 365 days a year which means that our private lives can easily be interrupted because of the long and unstable working hours" (Kimura, 2016). Longer hours worked are frequently correlated with worse work-life balance outcomes. What is important especially for generation Z, is that the long hours are unsocial and often it means that there is lack of flexibility. This lack of flexibility frequently results in employees (mostly younger workers), leaving the organization as well as the industry.

On the other hand, though, a culture of long working hours is very typical for the hospitality industry that many employees perceive their working hours as normal and hardly question this practice as it has become socially acceptable. A study conducted by (Nelson and Horchler, 1991), revealed that 36% of the respondents rated their job as the most important priority into their lives. However, for those employees, there is little relationship between workers' family situation and preferences for working fewer hours. Despite the little relationship, the long hours of hard work, still led to stress, burnout and minimized job performance (Wong and Ko, 2009). Businesses frequently provide momentary benefits to their employees as a motivational factor which would attract individuals that prioritize their work into their lives. But for individuals

who value work-life balance will be less likely to be driven by these benefits that the businesses provide if these benefits do not give greater value to their quality of their life (Lazar et al., 2010).

Due to the heightened interest of work-life balance from the organizations in all industries as well as the concerns of it, hotels also started offering various programs and initiatives to assist their employees manage a better balance among work demands and family (Beauregard, 2014). Contemporary studies regarding the long hours culture within the hospitality industry, have brought the issue back to the forefront (MacInnes, 2006). Apart from the overstretched employees, all workers have commenced to be aware of the various impacts of the long working hours and the heavy workloads. Employers have started realizing the fact that employees are struggling, therefore they started aiding them by introducing and presenting numerous benefits for instance providing traditional remuneration packages to their staff which also assisted in attracting talent in the workplace but also to improve the retention rate. The benefits that hotels provided refer to compassionate leave, leave to get married, office parties, holiday houses and training courses that aid their personal development. Many of their benefits are specifically designed to be family friendly in order to balance shift workers' family needs because of their erratic job nature (Cheung and Sucher, 2017).

Since the hospitality industry has a culture of long working hours as mentioned earlier, employees perceive their working hours as normal. Various studies have brought the issue back to the forefront and realized that all employees have started to be aware of the impacts of long working hours and heavy workloads. Because of the long and irregular hours of work, role overload as well as considerable pressure over an extended period of time, numerous employees as well as managerial level employees have quit their job because of the burnout and stress levels caused from the improper work-life balance and the quality of life employees within the hospitality industry face (Doherty, 2004). From various surveys that had been

conducted, employees who work within the hospitality industry stated that the work environment and the working hours create stress levels (Wong and Ko, 2009). It had been stated that 36% of the participants rated “quality of life” as the most crucial priority. Therefore, if employees feel that their work and lives are not balanced, they may leave the job and seek another job for a better “quality of life” (MacInnes, 2005).

Over the last few years, since the concept of work-life balance has become a priority within hotels, the hospitality industry attempts to design work-life initiatives in a strategic way but also to be respected and accepted within the organizational culture of the industry to adequately benefit the employees of the industry but also for the businesses which they work. The increase in the importance of the term is because employers have understood that the term is the most crucial factor for the employees. Therefore, by improving their work-life balance, the organization will eventually improve its performance because of more satisfied, less stressed and more committed employees (Lewis, 2010).

2.6-How did COVID-19 affect the hospitality industry and what strategies can be implemented to minimize the issue:

The new pandemic has confronted the hospitality sector worldwide with an extraordinary challenge. The hospitality industry in Cyprus as well as worldwide was the most affected industry. World Tourism Organization had stated that it was expected a reduction of tourists between 58%-70% in tourism in 2020 whereas Cyprus faced a reduction of 90% of its tourism. The new norms in order to tackle the pandemic refer to social distancing, community lockdowns, mobility and travel restrictions whereas new rules and regulations have imposed which decreased the demand of organizations which were allowed to continue to operate and there were issues that led to the decline of the hotels occupancy rates (Bartik et al., 2020). As

mentioned earlier, the pandemic has the strongest impact on the hospitality industry. Since the problem of the pandemic was developing, travel was restricted and new restrictions for the tourism industry were imposed which resulted in the closure of most hotels because of the operating costs were much higher in comparison to the profits that the hotel would make if they remained open. The new measures and the shutting down of hotels have resulted in big unemployment rates within the hospitality industry. The hospitality industry does not have similar features that during the crisis, the employees in other organizations used to work from home. Within the hospitality industry, the physical appearance of the employees most of the times is necessary. Hotels in order to cope with the pandemic, they carried out various measures and policies. Hotels have started marketing their rooms differently which could bring in new markets or early adopters. Various hotels internationally have started offering special rates for individuals who want to self-isolate in comfort. By offering lower rate rooms in such tough circumstances, shows compassion towards guests and enhances the reputation of the organization. Also, since international travel especially for leisure was banned for a long period of time, hotels have targeted domestic individuals which can increase the overall revenue from a smaller demand pool. Furthermore, the hotels have altered their hygiene and safety policies. Enterprises have changed their protocols and follow various rules and regulations to minimize the danger of spreading the virus. Examples include more frequent cleaning, social distancing, using various safety features such as gloves, masks etc.

The new pandemic ceased travel in the short term, but its effects will last into the foreseeable future. Hoteliers therefore are reworking existing projects but also starting new projects in order to function with the new norms. Therefore, hotel designs in the future after the pandemic will change. Hotels will involve touchless systems, multifunctional spaces, and conference rooms that open to the outdoors. Various experts have also agreed that gyms within the hotels will be replaced with in room fitness offerings or even gym equipment may be ordered to

private rooms like room service. Well-known hotels have included new offers for the pandemic in order for the hotel to operate. The organization has introduced three different tiers to work anywhere. These three tiers include day pass, stay pass and play pass. The day pass allows guests to book a stay from 6 a.m. until 6 p.m. with a 25 percent to 50 percent discount off a regular overnight reservation. A stay pass includes an overnight stay but also the early 6 a.m. check-in and late 6 p.m. check-out. It also includes complimentary evening cocktails when available as well as free breakfast. Whereas the play pass was introduced for multi-day stays where it comes with supervised activities for children and a business concierge (Sperance, 2020). Various well-known hotels such as Marriott have taken advantages from the pandemic. Marriott specifically, joined the group of “work from hotel trend” where they offer their guests rooms and replace them with offices as a viable business. The platform that the organization launched will have variety of options such as from day use to multiple day at a select number of their properties which will assist them in expanding their global portfolio. This is an advantage for the enterprise since it will allow them to investigate in consumer behavior and analyze the organization’s properties (Marriott, 2020).

Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Methods

3.1-Introduction:

The specific chapter examines the application of applicable research and its design to the specific study. The chapter is about a justification for a suitable and effective research methodology strategy, justifying an appropriate way to meet the aim and objectives of the study. It also debates on the various methods and methodology used to conduct the primary research which illustrates how practical researching relates to the theory derived from the literature review. An overview of potential research methods is considered and the methodology for getting the primary data is justified. Also, the method used to gather the data, ethical issues of the primary research and the advantages/disadvantages of the methods selected are examined.

3.2-Theoretical perspectives and their relationship with methodological approach:

Choosing the appropriate form of research approach, is an essential component of the research strategy. Saunders's et al research Onion (2007) (appendix four), examined research methodology which various parts were investigated in this research methodology. To start with, the research had an approach of "phenomenology" as the data gathered examined a phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2016), but also because it focused on the interpretation of individuals experiences (Wilson, 2015). The study had an inductive approach as the theory was derived from the data generated, which is an appropriate approach as it contains an examination of patterns from the observations and the development of the explanations (theories) from the patterns through the hypothesis (Bernard, 2011). Exploratory studies correlate with qualitative research. From theoretical perspectives, qualitative approach focusses on the interpretation and understanding of human attitudes which relates with interpretivist paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011) as the researcher is involved with the study drawing up on his individual

experience (Myers, 2008), but also because the researcher establishes interpretations from the participants answers to relate with the phenomenon being studied (Saunders et al., 2012).

Whereas on the other hand quantitative research is associated with positivism as it is an approach to the study of the society that relies on scientific evidence for example statistics and experiments to reveal a true nature of how the society works. Since it has a positivistic approach, it has deductive approach which refers to theory testing. So, the researcher starts with theory and collects evidence to accept or contradict it. The type of research undertaken for the specific study was mixed research i.e. both qualitative and quantitative research for various reasons. The main reason that mixed methods was used is because having a combination of quantitative and qualitative data can improve the evaluations by ensuring that the limitations of one type of data are balanced by the strengths of another. It will ensure that the overall understanding of the study is improved by undertaking different ways of knowing. Also, more in-depth analysis and conclusions could be drawn because of the comparisons that could be made between the two types of research. For the specific study, both interviews and questionnaires were selected as a data collection method.

The research methodology was selected to understand the perceptions of employees and human attitudes on supporting work-life balance in businesses and mainly in hotels. All the questions that were asked in the interview and questionnaires were all directly related to the objectives of the research which was specified to the participants so they could understand and answer accordingly to what the researcher expected. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were considered suitable as it required to understand the managers and employees' perceptions, behaviours and points of view.

3.3-Research methodology and method chosen:

A qualitative approach using qualitative phenomenological study was adopted which analysed live experiences from managers and employees. Convenience sampling was conducted to collect data because of the geographical proximity and the relatively easy access to the hotels and employees (Lavrakas, 2008:149). Phenomenological approach was chosen as the interviews dealt with employee's perceptions through qualitative method and a phenomenon is interpreted from participants experiences (Silverman, 2005). Qualitative method was suitable as it highlighted the participants experiences, more in-depth and high-quality information was collected from qualitative method so a better comparison and analysis could be identified (Suri, 2011). Also, because it interprets people's experiences of a phenomenon but also it emphasizes the idea of meanings, the point of view as well as the experiences of the participants which relates to the research of the study. The purpose of quantitative research is to quantify attitudes, behaviors, opinions and other defines variables and generalize the results from a larger sample population. This was important for the research paper because analyzing and understanding employees' attitudes and perceptions, assisted in achieving the objectives of the thesis.

3.4-Data collection techniques and sampling:

The data collection techniques that were used refer to the questionnaires and the interviews that were conducted to managers and hotel employees. The questions asked were related to the objectives of the study. The interviews were conducted in various hotels in Cyprus which were chosen through convenient sampling. Whereas the questionnaires were completed by the employees of the hotels where the interviews were held. Managers and employees were the most appropriate to research as it relates to the aim and objectives of the research. However, three managers were interviewed, and seventy-nine employees completed the survey

successfully. In order to cover the questions and research areas that formulate and sum up the paper's aims and objectives, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires were used (Neuman, 2002). The questions were prepared beforehand, and the questions related to the research theme and the language was easily comprehendible.

The data collection techniques selected were appropriate for this study as it allowed the researcher to protect collaboration from participants which assisted to collect suitable data which backed the aim of the study. The ease of access and limited time were two key factors that convenient sampling was chosen. The interviews were also recorded so the researcher could have and compare in depth responses.

3.5-Instrument:

The surveys and interview questions were specifically designed to assist understand more about the focus from employers on work-life balance and the employee's perceptions towards the concept in the hospitality industry. Every objective within the study had three questions that were related within the primary research (surveys and interviews) for both the managers and employees. Following the interviews, the conception of the participants was asked for the interviews to be recorded and transcribed in order to form the data set. The data was transcribed from the recordings and were analyzed to identify and describe various themes/patterns. The recordings from the interviews assisted the interviewer to collect more in-depth data and the researcher kept the important words. This was achieved by thematic coding system for example, "ideal balance" "job satisfaction", "behaviours" and various key points. After the interviews and the surveys, the responses were summarised, and conclusions were drawn from every participant. There were various categories formed from the questions of the interviews and surveys which relate to the participants themselves, importance, benefits, practices,

satisfaction and employee perceptions. The specific categories assist to obtain quality information on the objectives of the study and assists to make in depth comparisons with the literature review. During the interviews, there were various follow up questions which gave a better insight on their perceptions regarding work-life balance.

At the start of the survey, the researcher gathered information about the participants demographics. Various questions such as age and gender were asked which will assist the researcher identify trends and make comparisons within age groups and genders on how they perceive work-life balance. The first category which refers to job satisfaction, employees and managers were asked about their level of satisfaction with their work and home life balance. Other questions were also asked about the participants lives which provided a good indication on how satisfied they are with their work-life balance currently. These questions provided a better awareness of the participants satisfaction of balance. The second category which relates to importance, was designed to gather information regarding whether the concept has gained importance and if employees take into consideration the term. The questions that were asked to candidates will provide a good indication whether there is an increase in the importance of the term. Participants were also asked about the benefits that the concept could provide on both the business and the employees and the reasons that they started focusing more on the term which would give answers on why there is greater focus on the term which would give a good insight of the third objective of the study. The fourth category refers to practices. This section was designed to get an idea of what practices do the businesses adopt, or what practices could the businesses implement to support or improve the work-life balance of the employees. The last category was constructed, and specific questions were asked in order to find out the perspectives of employees on work-life balance within the hospitality industry.

3.6-Validity, reliability and access issues:

Validity and reliability were two crucial terms that had to be taken into consideration as they can impact on the overall data generated. Oliver (2010), agrees that the terms are important as he stated that the terms are obligatory requirements for all studies. Various techniques were used to enhance validity and reliability and to minimize bias. By choosing the appropriate methodology and the sample method for the specific study was a way to ensure validity. Also, the aim and objectives were clear to the participants. To ensure reliability, the interview times had similar duration and all interviews were conducted same time of the day (lunchtime). Reliability was ensured because throughout the research, the method was planned carefully in order for the researcher to make sure has carried out the identical steps and procedures in the same way throughout the research. When the researcher communicated with hotels for the interviews, managers were not present, however appointments were organised via telephone calls which resulted in difficult accessibility (Hammersley, 2000). Also, because of the global pandemic, numerous hotels in Cyprus were closed and various open hotels did not want to take part in the primary data of the research which again resulted in access issues.

3.7-Ethical considerations:

During the research, ethical issues were taken into consideration such as safety features, anonymity and privacy of the participants as well as their rights (Spicker, 2011a). Numerous procedures were followed to ensure that ethical problems were minimized. To start with, the aim was issued to the participants to avoid deception (Spicker, 2011b). As the participation was voluntarily, the researcher asked permission from the participants to participate (Wiles et al., 2007). The participants had an informed consent and knew they had the chance to withdraw at any point during the interview and permission was asked if participants could be recorded

and to be transcribed. By not identifying the participants names or the hotels names, verifies that anonymity and confidentiality will be secured (Sutton and David, 2004).

3.8-The research procedure:

Firstly, the interviews were piloted and as a result the questions were refined, and additional questions were added to get in depth answers for the objectives of the research. Ten participants were asked to participate in the specific procedure. When the piloting was completed, the researcher asked the participants whether the surveys and interviews needed to be adjusted and they were also asked to give feedback regarding the questions asked to ensure that clarity and quality information was gathered from the primary research. The piloting technique was also implemented in order to improve the structure as well as the durations of the interviews. From piloting, the researcher refined the questions and a few questions were added to get the answers which related to the objectives. The questions before and after piloting are illustrated in the table below. The dates of the research were planned according to when participants were available. The researcher visited three different hotels for the interviews. Individuals were asked for their agreement to take part in the interviews. The reason that the interviews were clarified was so that participants had an overview of the topic. The applicants were interviewed independently by a particular interviewer and were asked to answer fifteen questions that were related to the objectives of the study. The duration of the interviews lasted between twenty-five to thirty-five minutes whereas the surveys lasted approximately ten minutes. Also, before the interviews started, the aim and objectives were announced to the participants. The research was conducted between the 5th and 25th of November.

Figure 1: Questions to managers and employees that were related to the objectives of the study.

Objectives	Questions to Managers	Questions to Employees	Sources
1. To analyse the reasons why businesses are focusing more on the concept of “work-life balance”	What are the reasons that your hotel focuses on work-life balance?	Why do you think hotels started focusing more on sustainable practices?	(Pradhan et al., 2016)
	What is the impact of implementing work-life balance both to your employees and business?	What benefits do you think hotels gain from implementing work-life balance policies?	(Farivar et al., 2016)
	Do you believe that the concept of work life balance has become a main differentiator for employees? why?	Do you believe that the specific concept appeals to employees?	(Huang et al., 2016)
2. To investigate the role of “work-life balance” in the hospitality industry.	How important is the concept of work life balance for your employees?	Do you prefer jobs that support the concept of work-life balance?	(Fotiadis et al., 2019)
	Do you believe employees find it important for a business to support the concept of work life balance? Yes, No and why?	How likely is it that you would leave your job because of a poor work-life balance?	(Biswakarma et al., 2015).
	Are there any policies or practices that your business provides to support and improve employees work life balance?	Your family is the most significant factor to your happiness?	(Karatepe and Uludag, 2007)

<p>3. To evaluate the perceptions of hospitality employees on the concept of work-life balance and the importance it has in the industry.</p>	Does work-life balance play an important role on hospitality employee's decision making?	Do you believe that the hospitality has a poor work-life balance? Why?	(Luo, 2014)
	From your personal experience, is the turnover affected because of work life balance?	How important is the concept of work-life balance to you?	(Cheung and Sucher, 2017).
	Are there posts/departments in the business that have worse work life balance in comparison to other departments?	How could the work-life balance in the hospitality be improved?	(MacInnes, 2005).

Tool:

Figure 2: Questions changed as a result of the process (piloting).

Interview questions to managers:
1. Define what work life balance means to you
2. How important is the concept of work life balance for your employees?
3. Do you believe that the concept of work life balance has become a main differentiator for employees? why?
4. Does your business support the concept of work life balance?
5. Are there any policies or practices that your business provides to support work life balance?
6. What are the reasons that you focus on work life balance?
7. What is the impact of implementing work life balance both to your employees and business?
8. Do you believe that the concept of work life balance could have disadvantages as well? What are those?
9. Do you believe employees find it important for a business to support the concept of work life balance? Yes, No and why?
10. Does work life balance play an important role on employee's decision making?
11. How do you think employees evaluate work choices? Is work life balance within their decision?
12. Do you believe that work life balance will gain higher interest in the future and why?

13. From your personal experience, is the turnover affected because of work life balance?
14. Are there posts/departments in the business that have worse work life balance in comparison to other departments?
15. How did COVID-19 affect your business?

Figure 3: Survey questions for hotel employees changed from piloting process:

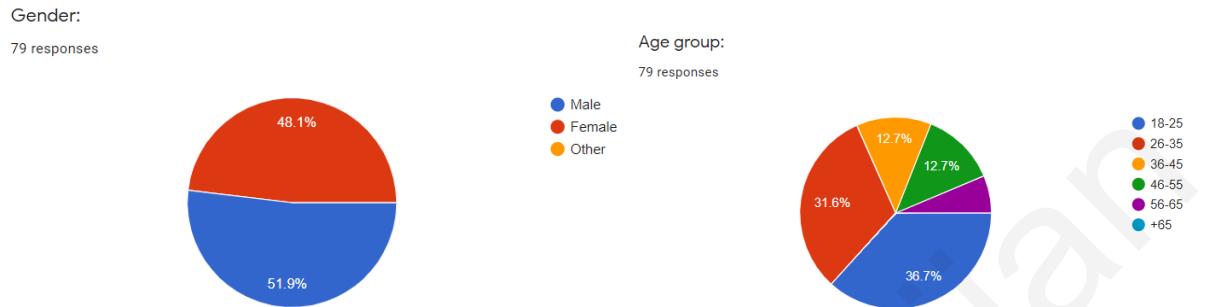
Survey questions for employees
1. Demographics: Gender and Age
2. In what department do you work in the hotel?
3. How many hours do you work per week?
4. Your job is the most significant factor to your happiness?
5. Your salary is the most significant factor to your happiness?
6. Your family is the most significant factor to your happiness?
7. What does the term work-life balance mean to you?
8. What is the ideal work-life balance for you?
9. How important is the concept of work-life balance for you?
10. Do you prefer jobs that support the concept of work-life balance?
11. Is the work-life balance concept a factor that you would consider when evaluating work choices?
12. What do you believe the benefits are when work-life balance is implemented?
13. How likely is it that you would leave your job because of a poor work-life balance?
14. Are you satisfied with your work and life balance currently? Why?
15. Is it easy for you to find time for hobbies, interest and needs?
16. Are you satisfied with the time you spend with your family/friends?
17. Do you think that the hospitality industry has a poor work-life balance? Why?
18. Do you believe that a poor work-life balance can has disadvantages on individuals? Why?
19. How could the work-life balance in the hospitality industry be improved?

Chapter 4: Primary Research Findings and Analysis

4.1-Introduction:

The previous methodology chapter has indicated and justified an appropriate way to research the areas highlighted and subsequent aims and objectives indicated in. This chapter will report in the emerging data and then it will be discussed in relation to the body of academic literature. More specifically, the findings of the primary research will be discussed and analysed which will be compared in relation with the literature review. The second objective was to find reasons why businesses started focusing more on the concept of work-life balance. To get answers related to the specific objective, various questions were asked to managers and employees that were focused on specific questions to get efficient and in-depth answers on the specific objective. The primary data was coded and analysed in depth from the recordings of the interviews as well as the returned surveys that the researcher had. As a result of interviewing the managers and providing questionnaires to employees for this study, a number of core factors emerged, which relate to the second objective of the research paper as they stated the reasons of focusing more on work-life balance over the years and that it has become a major factor within businesses. The questions that were asked to both managers and hospitality employees from the interviews and questionnaires, assisted in identifying key factors for the objectives of the paper. Finally, in both surveys and interviews, there were specific questions that targeted the rest of the objectives of the study. Mutual responses as well as differences appeared from both managers and employees. The transcript in the appendix sections, indicates an interview to one of the managers and that the questions were related to the aim and objectives of the paper.

4.2-Analysis



The pie charts above, indicate the seventy-nine surveys that were conducted from hospitality employees, had a good distribution of ages and a good ratio in between the two genders. This is important for the research as it gives it a more accurate and understandable social research and perceptions of what different age groups and genders believe and want. The distribution of ages also assists in minimizing the bias of the research, as various age groups completed the survey which helps generalizing the research of the population and not targeting and identifying only one age group and their beliefs which minimized bias.

The table below, highlights and gives an initial overview of the key themes that emerged from the analysis of the surveys and interviews.

Figure 4: Key themes emerged for objective two

Objective 2: Reasons why businesses started focusing more on the concept of work-life balance	Increased productivity of employees.
	Increased commitment and motivation of employees.
	Less stressed workforce and better mental health.
	Minimize absenteeism since employees will feel appreciated, respected and encouraged.

To start with, all three managers stated that the term work-life balance nowadays, was implemented and supported within their hotels which proves that the term has become a crucial component within the industry. Manager two stressed out that work-life balance is becoming something big, which illustrates that more and more people are taking the term into consideration. Manager two more specifically mentioned that “*Work-life balance has become something big. Organizations should start focusing more on work-life balance, since it is one of the main factors that keeps individuals motivated and a key factor to keep them satisfied*”.

Individuals are becoming more aware and informed of a healthier work-life balance and believe its organizations responsibility to support and improve individuals work-life balance which is a reason that the concept is attracting more individuals. The result therefore, is that work-life balance is gaining momentum. The discussion of manager three, was also highlighted by (Stavrou and Ierodiakonou, 2015) and (Meenakshi et al, 2013) who reported that global awareness regarding work-life balance is growing and has received substantial interest from the society and that various employers are searching and implementing policies and practices in order to assist employees achieve a higher satisfactory work-life balance.

Most participants from the surveys stated that they believe a reason that businesses have started implementing policies to improve the work-life balance of individuals refers to the increased productivity of their employees. By comparing the surveys, it seems that productivity was the most important benefit according to the participants since it was stated as the number one priority and, in 65% of the surveys, productivity was mentioned within their benefits. Manager one and two also stated that a main reason for supporting work-life balance is to increase the productivity of employees. The statements of all employees and managers could be related with the literature review since (MacDonald 2005) had also highlighted the fact that a healthier work-life balance will result in minimizing absenteeism, therefore, improvements in performance will be noticeable at an individual level. Thus, this will have an overall effect on

the company as well, because it will be detected that the improved individual performance will result in an increase in productivity at organizational levels. On the other hand though, manager three had a different opinion. More specifically, the manager stated that ‘*most of the times, when various policies are implemented from companies to assist the work-life balance of employees such as work from home, it can damage the productivity of employees. This is because employees can be easily destructed from various factors while working remotely. Also, the communication is more time consuming so automatically the productivity is reduced*’.

Various employers have therefore stated that if enterprises have the required technology and strategies to support their employees work-life balance, then the productivity will improve.

Apart from increased productivity, employees mentioned that when an organization has a culture of work-life balance, its employees will be more committed to the business, therefore the motivation of employees will increase. More specifically, various employees stated that when employers take into consideration the workers work-life balance ‘*they feel more valuable, appreciated, respected and encouraged which makes employees happier and motivated to work for the organization*’. Increased motivation was also stressed out from manager one, as he stated the fact that ‘*work-life balance can indeed be a motivational factor since it minimizes the conflicts among work and life responsibilities. So, employers seeking to assist employees minimize their conflicts among work and life, will enhance their relationship and make them more committed towards their organizations*’’. The specific arguments of the participants, links in with the study of (Pradhan et al., 2016), who stated that if organizations illustrate and promote the fact that they pay attention and show consideration to their workers well-being and have a culture of work-life balance, automatically employees will demonstrate higher organizational commitment and loyalty because of the emotional attachment that they will have with the organization. There will be a relationship between work-life balance culture and commitment because if organizations have set of values and beliefs which are supportive

of work-life balance and the well-being of their employees, individuals will feel more confident and motivated towards their business. Also, the employees will feel supportive, hence an enhancement on their commitment will be noticeable because enterprises with such policies will be willing to assist individuals to manage their schedule better which could be seen from employees as empathy and consciousness.

Furthermore, managers one and three mentioned a key benefit of work-life balance being the reduction of stress levels. The specific benefit is of high importance since work related stress is a growing issue and has become one of the biggest problems globally which eventually affects the health and wellbeing of individuals. Manager two more specifically declared that ‘’*having a good work-life balance can significantly assist in reducing stress in the workforce. This was also proven by various research studies*’’. By managing a healthier work-life balance, it will minimize stress and improve mental health in the long run which was also indicated by a number of participants from the surveys. Stress of individuals will be reduced since a better work-life balance will result in more relaxed and confident employees, everyday pressure from work and everyday life will be reduced and job burnout will be minimized as well. This was seen in approximately 35% of the surveys as employees mentioned that a benefit could refer as ‘’*better health and wellbeing, less anxiety due to more time and better time management between professional and personal lives*’’. This is supported by the study of (Meenaksh et al., 2013) who highlight that employers have started encouraging individuals to take time off from work instead of investing in long hours, because employees tied up to their work, regularly have symptoms of burnout and high stress levels. By finding a balance between work and life, it can assist in reducing negative organizational stress. Therefore, if individuals cannot find enough time for themselves to relax and recharge, then their abilities to meet their everyday tasks will be minimized and tension will be built resulting in increased stress levels.

On the focus of work-life balance, managers commented that absenteeism will be affected when work-life balance is enhanced. More specifically, they mentioned that the absenteeism of employees will be minimized since various policies can provide opportunities and time to employees to take care of their personal necessities as well. A national survey illustrated that only 34% of employees have unscheduled absences due to illnesses whereas 53% of absenteeism relates to personal issues, family needs and stress. Thirty percent of the employees had mentioned something similar by affirming “*if the employees are not appreciated and respected at work, then employees will feel discouraged and might not feel motivated to go to work which can result in some kind of absenteeism. Also, if individuals are having problems at home, which they don't have the time to solve, again can result in some sort of absenteeism or for them not being 100% attentive*”. The discussion associates in with (Farivat et al., 2016) study as they mentioned that the employees will feel supportive, hence an enhancement on their commitment will be noticeable since enterprises with such policies will be willing to assist individuals to manage their schedule better which could be seen from employees as empathy and consciousness which will eventually result in minimizing absenteeism.

Various key elements were identified from both managers and hospitality employees on the concept of work-life balance within the hospitality industry. The table below illustrates the key themes that came up from the analysis of the surveys and interviews.

Figure 5: Key themes emerged for objective three:

Objective 3: To investigate the concept of work-life balance in the hospitality industry.	Crucial concept since it is the biggest problem in the hospitality industry.
	Lack of work-life balance in the industry.
	The industry does not support the overall concept effectively.

	Work-life balance differs depending the department of the hotel.
--	--

Since hospitality is a demanding industry with very long and challenging shifts that most of the employees cannot have control over their long hours, work-life balance automatically becomes an issue for workers. One of the biggest problems, therefore, is the concept of work-life balance in the industry. The issue was also perceived by manager one where he stated that “ *work-life balance is certainly one of the major matters because of the nature of the hotels that operate all day long and the fact that there is shortage of employees in the industry, makes it a challenge to improve the concept* ” . Hospitality employees, however, require high levels of flexibility in their personal lives to ensure that they can still make various social commitments and enjoy their own free time which are not the expected and regular hours of employees in other industries. By having shifts that are outside the usual nine-five, can result in collapsing with the employee’s personal lives. For example, long night shifts will result in an imbalance of employee’s work-life balance since various responsibilities or expectations from family but also friends can easily be abandoned. This declaration was also supported by (Biswakarma et al., 2015). It was clearly noticeable the fact that hospitality employees had mutual thoughts, as various employees mentioned that “ *the imbalance of work and life can be easily destructed since in my opinion when my family will be having their holidays and spending time together, I will be in a busy period working long hours in the hotel missing all friends and family moments* ” . Employees and managers stressed out because of the nature of the hospitality industry, the concept of work-life balance is one of the biggest issues.

Figure 6:Correlation among work-life balance and family factors

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Your family is the most significant factor to your happiness	4.54	.712	79
How important is the concept of work-life balance to you?	4.38	.756	79
Correlations			
		Your family is the most significant factor to your happiness	How important is the concept of work-life balance to you?
Pearson Correlation	Your family is the most significant factor to your happiness	1.000	.016
	How important is the concept of work-life balance to you?	.016	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Your family is the most significant factor to your happiness	.	.444
	How important is the concept of work-life balance to you?	.444	.
N	Your family is the most significant factor to your happiness	79	79
	How important is the concept of work-life balance to you?	79	79

A main reason that work-life balance is a major issue in the hospitality industry, could be said that employees' families are one of the most significant factors to their happiness and therefore the importance regarding their work-life balance is very high. This could also be illustrated in figure 6 above. The scale ranges from 0 (lowest) to 5(highest) and from the responses of employees, the overall mean was 4.54 for the significance of the family and 4.38 for the significance of work-life balance which proves that both factors are crucially important for hospitality employees. Furthermore, the table represents Pearson's correlation for work-life

balance and family. The strength of correlation lies between the numbers -1 and 1. By looking at the results from the table above, it can be identified that both work-life balance and family have a correlation of 1 which represents that they have a powerful correlation among them.

From the surveys, it was explored that there is lack of work-life balance in the hospitality industry or the term is not implemented effectively in hotels so that employees can earn sufficient benefits from it. The participants that had a full-time work in the hospitality industry, mentioned that they were not satisfied with their own work-life balance for various reasons. 70% of employees mentioned that, the long working hours result in a displeasure of work-life balance since various of their needs and responsibilities are not fulfilled. Some employees are not delighted with their work because they can't achieve their everyday goals due to the long hours which they referred it to as "*No I am not happy with my work-life balance, I waste a lot of time at my current place of employment without having the time to pursuing my own goals*". 50% of the employees, mentioned the fact that the hospitality industry has a very demanding and stressful environment which results in longer hours of recovery, which has an overall reflection on the employees' work-life balance since employees cannot accomplish their wants and needs after work because of the high levels of exhaustion. Employees stated that they are not satisfied with their work-life balance "*because by working a minimum of 8 hours in a demanding environment gets you more tired and you sleep earlier at night to be ready to work the next day which means the day is gone*". This links with the study of (Fotiadis et al., 2019), who have established that working in such business environments can often be problematic since employees must deal with an exploitative, stressful and precarious work environment, long and anti-social working hours which are very demanding workload shift duties, all of which prevent the employees from balancing family duties, work and other necessities. Approximately 15% of employees, had a part-time job. From their responses, it was proven that the long working hours is a crucial factor that affects the work-life balance of individuals

in a negative way, since part-time workers stated that they are satisfied with their own work-life balance as they have sufficient time to balance their professional and personal needs. More specifically, employees specified that they are satisfied because ‘’I am a part-time worker, however my working hours are not too long which means I have time for personal matters as well’’ and ‘’I only have morning shift, so I can plan the rest of the day doing things that I like’’. The specific comments go in hand with (Huang et al., 2016), because they had highlighted that a practice that could be implemented to improve the work-life balance of individuals refers to sharing or part-time job which was proven from the responses of the surveys that indeed, part-time work improves work-life balance.

Hospitality employees and managers had contrasting opinions whether the industry supports the employees work-life balance. Due to the difficult circumstances of the hospitality industry such as the shortage of employees and the fact that hotels operate incessantly, it makes it challenging for such businesses to imply policies and practices to have a great effect on employee’s work-life balance. Approximately 30% of employees specified that it depends on the season. More specifically they stated that work-life balance can be achieved when the hotels are in their off-peak by mentioning that ‘’during peak periods it has a big imbalance of life and work but that is acceptable and understood’’. Also, most of the times, the employees not having the chance to select their own shifts to have a more flexible schedule can result in a poor work-life balance. Employees mentioned the fact that ‘’hospitality industry does not support work-life balance since working long night shifts during your duties, makes spending time with loved ones difficult’’. The specific comment complies with the study of (Kaya and Karatepe, 2020) as they had the same views. 20% of employees stated that the hospitality industry cannot support the concept since when employees need their time off from work, it is during a high season period which is impossible for employees to enjoy their vacations. Participants quoted this by saying ‘’During low season, employees enjoy your time off and

even most of the times can have preferences on their time of shifts''. In this way, during low season, employees can manage their personal responsibilities as well since they have the chance to be more flexible with their timetable. On the other hand, manager two stated that, “*in these new difficult times, employers are trying to find new ways and policies to operate their business which also benefits the work life balance of employees*”. Since last year, hotels have started the work from home schemes where implacable such as front desk, HR and accounting departments etc, which is a way that impacts the work-life balance of employees. The specific clarification of manager two, contradicts with the statements of (Kaya and Karatepe, 2020) and (Lowe, 2007) since they had stated that work-life balance was never a priority in hospitality industry and instead employers attempt to discover policies and strategies that challenge the industry and keep up with the new trends.

It was also identified from 25% of employees that work-life balance differs depending in what department of the hotel do employees work in and the duration of work. Employees brought up the fact that employees working within an office usually have a better work-life balance in comparison to non-office workers. More specifically, they mentioned that “*Office workers usually have a better work life balance than non-office workers such as a receptionist at a hotel. Having a routine with the same working hours every day makes it easier to balance it*”. The specific statement was also cited by manager three as he stated that various departments within the hotel such as the receptionist can work from home when it is necessary for them to be at home. More precisely, he mentioned that “*now that employees must work from home during these difficult circumstances, departments such as the HR and the reception can work from home since they have the tools and the nature to do so. Other industries that its nature requires employees to be present, is more difficult to manage their work-life balance*”.

Examples refer to the food and beverage department and the security and maintenance department. Office employees may have less demanding and less stressful work hours in

comparison to the front of the house employees (who have contact with customers), since they do not provide direct service to customers which can be easier for them to work from different locations or at different times which automatically improves their work-life balance. The same exact comment was highlighted in the literature review by (Karatepe and Uludag, 2007), who stated that various researchers had illustrated that front-line workers in the hospitality industry face a worst work life balance in comparison to other workers because of their job elated responsibilities.

Figure 7: Key themes emerged for objective four

Objective 4: perceptions of hospitality employees on the concept of work-life balance and the importance it has in the industry.	Unsatisfied hospitality employees from their work-life balance
	Hospitality employees prefer work that supports more effectively the concept
	Most employees struggle with their work-life balance.
	Disadvantages of a poor work-life balance

Most of the employees stated that they are not satisfied with their own work-life balance within the hotel industry for various reasons. Employees gave their opinion on their own work-life balance and the main reasons they believed it resulted to a poor work-life balance. As the secondary data has illustrated, employees specified this by mentioning that they have a poor work-life balance because of the nature of the industry. As mentioned earlier, the fact that most of the work shifts/timetables are not fixed, results in a conflict of their personal and professional needs. Also, the fact that it is high demanding work with long hours, minimizes again their personal time to devote in their own ways. Work-life balance by impacting negatively employee's satisfaction, commitment and productivity, illustrates that the term has increased its importance within the personal lives of employees and that employees take into consideration the term of work-life balance.

Figure 8: Crosstabulation – age group and preference on work-life balance

Age group: * Do you prefer jobs that support the concept of work-life balance? Crosstabulation				
Count		Do you prefer jobs that support the concept of work-life balance?		
Age group:		Maybe	No	Yes
18-25	0	0	0	29
26-35	0	1	0	24
36-45	0	1	1	8
46-55	0	0	0	10
56-65	0	2	0	3
Total	18	4	1	74

Figure 9: Crosstabulation- age group and importance of work-life balance

How important is the concept of work-life balance to you? * Age group: Crosstabulation							
Count		Age group:					
How important is the concept of work-life balance to you?		18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	Total
2	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
3	1	1	4	2	2	10	10
4	5	13	3	4	1	26	26
5	23	11	3	3	2	42	42
Total		29	25	10	10	5	79

Key: From 1 (not important) to 5 (extremely important).

In fact, as figures 7 and 8 above illustrate, almost all the employees stated that they prefer businesses that support the concept of work-life balance since it has become either a very important aspect for them or extremely important. Due to the importance the concept has gained in the new era, most participants had quoted that the concept of work-life balance would be a factor that they would consider when evaluating work choices. The table also displays that younger generations have mentioned that, the term “work-life balance” is an extremely important aspect for them. More specifically, 96% of younger employees (up to the age of 35),

had stated that the term is either important or extremely important for them. The specific theme was highlighted by (Luo,2014), as in his study referred to employees especially millennials and generation Z that prioritize work life balance, have negative experiences in relation to hotel work environments and conditions. Younger generations within the hotel industry are preparing for a new job that provides and supports work life balance policies and practices in order to improve their work life balance which goes in hand with the participants responses.

Figure 10: Age group and consideration of work-life balance

Age group: * Is the work-life balance concept a factor that you would consider when evaluating work choices? Crosstabulation			
Age group:	Is the work-life balance concept a factor that you would consider when evaluating work choices?		
	Maybe	Yes	Total
18-25	2	27	29
26-35	2	23	25
36-45	6	4	10
46-55	4	6	10
56-65	4	1	5
Total	18	61	79

Most of the responses, mostly younger ages as figure 9 above represents, had stated that the concept of work-life balance was a factor that they would take into consideration when evaluating work choices. From their responses, which are illustrated in the table above, it can be perceived that work-life balance for younger employees is more important in comparison to older employees as 92% of younger employees responded "yes" whereas for older generations, 53% answered "maybe". This illustrates that the concept of work-life balance has gained momentum nowadays and has become an important aspect in employees' everyday lives. The specific results perfectly combine with the study of (Kelliher et al., 2019). The anova table in figure 10, proves this fact as it illustrates that there is a high correlation between family as a factor of happiness and the importance of work-life balance since the significance factor is >0.05 showing that the variable is statistically significant. This states that the employee's

main happiness factor is family, therefore they highly value their work-life balance in order to have efficient time with their families.

Figure 11: ANOVA - significance of family to overall happiness

```
ONEWAY Yourfamilyisthemostsignificantfactortoyourhappiness BY  
Howimportantistheconceptofworklifebalancetoyou  
/MISSING ANALYSIS  
/CRITERIA=CILEVEL(0.95).
```

→ **Oneway**

ANOVA

Your family is the most significant factor to your happiness

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.309	3	.103	.197	.898
Within Groups	39.286	75	.524		
Total	39.595	78			

From most of the employees, it was stated that there was a poor work-life balance within the hospitality industry for various reasons and various symptoms of the unhealthy work-life balance were identified. To start with, the main reasons that employees supposed there was lack of work-life balance were the fact that they had long (often covering overtimes) and demanding working hours every week. Employees mentioned that “*Yes there is a poor work-life balance because many times we have to complete unexpected overtimes so we cannot plan ahead*”. This relates with the publication of (Kaya and Karatepe, 2020) as they stated that the long and demanding work is the major problem for employees. Also, there were departments such as food and beverage that was mentioned the unstable timetable they had since they could have either morning shifts or evening/late night shifts that affected their work-life balance negatively. On the other hand, employees mentioned that the work-life balance varies from department to department as office departments such as Human Resources or Accounts and Credit department have a healthier work life balance. A comment that was raised from various

employees regarding the specific aspect refers to “ depends on the department you are working in. Office workers usually have a better work life balance than non-office workers such as a receptionist at a hotel. Having a routine with the same working hours every day makes it easier to balance it ”. (Karatepe and Uludag, 2007) as stated earlier they illustrated this fact by stating that front-line workers in the hospitality industry face a worst work life balance in comparison to other workers because of their job related responsibilities. There is increased stress and exhaustion faced from front line employees due to irregular work schedules.

Finally, there were various disadvantages that were identified from the responses of employees resulting from a poor work-life balance. 50% of employees mentioned that two main disadvantages are the tiredness that results from the poor work-life balance because of the fatigue from the long working hours and that the productivity levels of the employees reduces. A comment that was mentioned by a big number of employees relates to “ a poor work-life balance can have disadvantages, because of unhappy employees are not productive ” or “ I see it myself that employees get tired and as a result they don't give their maximum potential which is understandable ”.

Figure 12: Age group and intentions to leave company because of poor work-life balance

Age group: * How likely is it that you would leave your job because of a poor work-life balance? Crosstabulation						
Age group:	How likely is it that you would leave your job because of a poor work-life balance?					Count
	1	2	3	4	5	
18-25	1	2	3	12	11	29
26-35	0	2	6	13	4	25
36-45	0	1	5	3	1	10
46-55	0	1	3	4	1	9
56-65	0	0	3	2	0	5
Total	1	6	20	34	17	78

Figure 13: T- Test likelihood of leaving an organization because of a poor work-life balance

One-Sample Effect Sizes					
		Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
How likely is it that you would leave your job because of a poor work-life balance?	Cohen's d	.925	4.076	3.394	4.754
	Hedges' correction	.934	4.036	3.361	4.707

a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.

Cohen's d uses the sample standard deviation.

Hedges' correction uses the sample standard deviation, plus a correction factor.

Furthermore, employees mentioned that because of a poor work-life balance, it can result in various family conflicts but also in unsatisfied employees since they do not have the time they desire to spend with their family or friends. The conflicts from the poor work-life balance can result in the employees leaving an organization as shown in figure 11 above. Again, by analyzing the data, younger generations are more likely to leave an organization in comparison to older generations because of a poor work-life balance. From the responses, the specific statement can be proven, as from the age group of 18-25, 82% of employees are highly likely to leave an organization whereas at the age group of 56-65, most employees had a neutral opinion which illustrates that the term is not as important to older individuals as it is to younger generations .The T- test in figure 12 above, illustrates the 95% Confidence Interval of (3.394, 4.745). Since the scale used for the factor “How likely is that you would leave your job because of poor work-life balance”, is 1 to 5, we conclude that it is more likely for employees to leave their job, as the 95% Confidence Interval is much higher than the mean of the scale at 2.5. Employees also highlighted that the long working hours can definitely result in stress which affects the mental health of the individuals. Employees stated this by mentioning “ *not everyone can handle long hours and stress, and this can lead to mental breakdowns or health problems from overworking and extreme levels of stress* ”. All the main disadvantages that were pointed out from the employees were related with the secondary findings.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1-Introduction:

This final chapter sums up the analysis between the literature of secondary research with the findings of the primary research of the specific study as a whole. The particular chapter states whether or not the aims and objectives were achieved and indicates what the thesis has accomplished. The implications and summary of the main objectives of the thesis are mentioned. Moreover, a brief analysis of implications of what was found out will be stated which can assist on pushing the debates on the specific subject forward. Furthermore, various final recommendations will be given for more accurate and better results for future research.

5.2-Conclusions:

The study advances the literature on the link between work-life balance and the hospitality industry. The overall aim for the specific thesis was to evaluate the reasons that businesses started focusing on work-life balance and what are the employee's attitudes towards it within the hospitality industry. The results identified that there are numerous reasons that hotels have started focusing more on the concept of work-life balance and that employees' perceptions have changed positively towards the term over years. The literature review, along with the primary research were critically evaluated which aided with provision and sufficient underpinning of the analysis of the research objectives. The conclusions are grouped according to the overall research themes which are divided by objective.

The objectives of the specific research were achieved and brought as follows:

- To analyse the reasons why businesses started focusing more on the concept of work-life balance.
- To investigate the concept of work-life in the hospitality industry.

- To evaluate the perceptions of hospitality employees on the concept of work-life balance and the importance it has in the industry

The importance of work-life balance was successfully achieved, as the objective was critically evaluated through the research of primary data collection with a combination of literature review as it focused on areas closely related with benefits of work-life balance and reasonings of implementing the concept within businesses. The literature review as well as the interviews and surveys have acknowledged evidence and have highlighted the importance of work-life balance. While undertaking primary data, hotel managers as well as employees were asked to state the reasons and the benefits hotel could have when work-life balance was implemented more effectively. Both managers and employees had different answers, however the data was analysed which helped the researcher develop on the objective which eventually assisted to draw conclusions.

By gathering data from primary and secondary research regarding the managers and employees' views and knowledge on work-life balance, has assisted to achieve the second and third objectives. This was achieved by identifying and analyzing employees and managers experiences on work-life balance in hotels. The specific part of research revealed that hospitality employees are altering their behaviors towards work-life balance and are motivated to work with businesses where work-life balance is supported as the term has gained high importance within the society. The main key themes that were recorded from secondary data as well as survey responses. refer to the fact that overall, the hospitality industry has a poor work-life balance because of long working hours, the demanding responsibilities and the fact that employees do not have a steady work schedule/timetable which damages their work-life balance. Therefore, most full-time employees are not satisfied with their own work-life balance since they do not have time or energy to spend with family/friends. From the evaluations, it was clear that the work-life balance varies from one department to another because of the nature

of their work. It was also revealed that younger generations find the concept of work-life balance more important in comparison to other age groups and they prefer jobs that support their work-life balance which they would also consider when evaluating work choices and would think of quitting their jobs because of a poor work-life balance.

Finally, both primary as well as secondary data specified that there are various disadvantages to individuals when they have a poor work-life balance. The main disadvantages were stated as minimized productivity because of tiredness and unsatisfied/unhappy employees which would also damage the productivity of hotels, the mental health/physical wellbeing will be damaged because of high stress levels and that employees reach burnout levels because of heavy workloads which eventually damages the effectiveness of their work. On the other hand, when work-life balance is supported, various benefits could be detected. The main themes that came up regarding the benefits refer to happier, satisfied, more committed employees and increase in motivation levels, which improves the productivity and effectiveness of the individuals as well as the productivity of businesses because of improvements in their performances since they will have minimized stress levels, improved mental health, and no signs of burnout and tiredness.

Providing various recommendations could benefit for future studies. If the study had to be repeated, taking into consideration the recommendations more accurate and better results could be raised.

5.3-Recommendations:

Although the aim and objectives were clearly planned out and achieved, there were various themes emerged which probably need to be explored further.

The overall consensus of the contributors is that work-life balance as a concept has a positive image. Most of the participants, stated that would prefer and would like a hotel to have practices that support work-life balance. Their responses suggest that implementing work-life balance programs and practices in hotels will improve the reputation of the business. The fact that all managers stated that work-life balance will grow in the future, indicates the fact that the term will become more popular and more important for the public. This indicates that, work-life balance will remain one of the big factors that employees will use to evaluate work choices together with salary and working conditions. Almost all participants agreed with the study of (Stavrou and Ierodiakonou, 2015), as they stated that they take work-life balance into consideration because the global awareness regarding work-life balance is growing and has received substantial interest from the society, As stated by the participants, the support from hoteliers regarding employees work-life balance in lacking. Participants want to notice a change in that so the public can increase their motivation and desire to be more satisfied with their work conditions with the hospitality industry. So, if managers alter they focus and pay more attention on improving employees work-life balance by implementing various programs, practices or strategies, the term will increase its importance and more people will be willing to work in hotels and will eventually overcome the issue of high turnover.

If the study could be repeated, various factors could be changed to get more accurate results and have better insights on sustainability and debates on future trends. If the study had to be repeated, a different area and a different country would be selected to target other group of people which would limit the bias and the results would be more accurate as another research on another sample would be analyzed. Larger sample could also assist in getting more reliable and accurate results because of the bigger sample. Finally, the areas that were not expected to come up during the interviews, could be researched in more detail to get better insights.

References:

- Bartik, A. W., Bertrand, M., Cullen, Z. B., Glaeser, E. L., Luca, M., & Stanton, C. T. (2020). How are small businesses adjusting to COVID-19? Early evidence from a survey (No. w26989). National Bureau of Economic Research
- Bataineh, K., 2019. Impact of Work-Life Balance, Happiness at Work, on Employee Performance. *International Business Research*, 12(2), p.99.
- Bataineh, K., 2019. Impact of Work-Life Balance, Happiness at Work, on Employee Performance. *International Business Research*, [online] 12(2), p.99. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330451021_Impact_of_Work-Life_Balance_Happiness_at_Work_on_Employee_Performance> [Accessed 3 August 2020].
- Bednarska, M., 2013. Quality of Work Life in Tourism – Implications for Competitive Advantage of the Tourism Industry. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Research*, [online] pp.1-18. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Marlena_Bednarska/publication/292605860_Quality_of_work_life_in_tourism_-_implications_for_competitive_advantage_of_the_tourism_industry/links/56af82d208ae9f0ff7b260b0.pdf> [Accessed 30 July 2020].

Benckendorff, P., Edwards, D., Jurowski, C., Liburd, J. J., Miller, G. and Moscardo, G. (2009). Exploring the Future of Tourism and Quality of Life. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 9(2): 171-183. [Accessed 8 August 2020].

Bernard, H.R. (2011) "Research Methods in Anthropology" 5th edition, AltaMira Press, p.7

Berry, J., Pidd, K., Roche, A .and Harrison, J. (2007) Prevalence and patterns of alcohol use in the Australian workforce: Findings from the 2001 National Drug Strategy Household Survey. *Addiction* 102: 1399 – 1410.

Biswakarma, S., Sandilyan, P. and Mukherjee, M., 2015. WORK LIFE BALANCE FOR HOSPITALITY EMPLOYEES - A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF TWO FIVE STAR HOTELS IN KOLKATA. *ELK Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resource Management and Organisational Behaviour*, [online] 1(2), pp.1-16. Available at: <<https://www.elkjournals.com/MasterAdmin/UploadFolder/WORK%20LIFE%20BALANCE%20FOR%20HOSPITALITY%20EMPLOYEES/WORK%20LIFE%20BALANCE%20FOR%20HOSPITALITY%20EMPLOYEES.pdf>> [Accessed 25 August 2020].

Buonocore, F. (2010) 'Contingent work in the hospitality industry: A mediating model of organizational attitudes', *Tourism Management*, Vol. 31, pp. 378-358.

Cheung, C. and Sucher, W., 2017. *How Do Young Millennial Professional Stay Happy At Work? Work Life Balance And Hotel Career*. [online] Available at:

<http://globalbizresearch.org/Dubai_Conference_Oct_2017_2/docs/doc/3.%20Management%20and%20Marketing/DT767.pdf> [Accessed 1 September 2020].

Claveria, O. Monte, E and Torra, S. (2017): Tourism demand forecasting with neural network models: Different ways of treating information International Journal of Tourism Research, 17 (2015), pp. 494-500

Deery, M. and Jago, L., 2009. *A Framework for Work – Life Balance Practices: Addressing The Needs Of The Tourism Industry*. [online] Jhta.org. Available at: <http://www.jhta.org/images/PDF/FrameWork_For_Work-Life_Balance.pdf> [Accessed 22 October 2020].

Delfgaauws, J. (2007b) Where to go? Workers 'reasons to quit and intra-versus interindustry job mobility. Applied Economics 39 (16): 2057 – 2067

Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (2011). The Sage handbook of qualitative research. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Doherty, L., 2004. Work-life balance initiatives: implications for women. *Employee Relations*, [online] 26(4), pp.433-452. Available at: <<https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/01425450410544524/full/html>> [Accessed 5 August 2020].

Farivar, F., Cameron, R. and Yaghoubi, M., 2016. Work-family balance and cultural dimensions: from a developing nation perspective. *Personnel Review*, [online] 45(2), pp.315-

333. Available at: <<https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/PR-09-2014-0196/full/html>> [Accessed 7 September 2020].

Fotiadis, A., Abdulrahman, K. and Spyridou, A., 2019. *The Mediating Roles Of Psychological Autonomy, Competence And Relatedness On Work-Life Balance And Well-Being*. [online] Frontiers In Psychology. Available at: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01267/full?fbclid=IwAR2dzNjm9vcxmBA30-HGUwdpW4b5hPuYqQUuhe6s7_JO_3uBFYtILMuRvvA> [Accesssed 22 October 2020].

Gragnano, A., Simbula, S. and Miglioretti, M., 2020. Work–Life Balance: Weighing the Importance of Work–Family and Work–Health Balance. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, [online] 17(3), p.907. Available at: <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7037206/>> [Accessed 18 September 2020].

Hammersley, M. (2000). The issue of quality in qualitative research. [online] Marjee.org. Available at: http://www.marjee.org/pdfs/Hammersley_issue.pdf [Accessed 14 November 2020].

Hatch, M.J., Schultz, M. (2009) Taking Brand Initiative. How Companies Can Align Strategy, Culture, and Identity Through Corporate Branding. San Francisco: JosseyBass.

Heathfield, S., 2019. *The Pros And Cons Of A Flexible Work Schedule*. [online] The Balance Careers. Available at: <<https://www.thebalancecareers.com/advantages-and-disadvantages-of-flexible-work-schedules-1917964>> [Accessed 19 September 2020].

Huang, L., Ahlstrom, D., Lee, A., Chen, S. and Hsieh, M., 2016. High performance work systems, employee well-being, and job involvement: an empirical study. *Personnel Review*, 45(2), pp.296-314.

Jones, F., Burke, R. and Westman, M., 2006. *Work-Life Balance: A Psychological Perspective*. 1st ed. East Sussex: Psychology Press, p.2.

Jones, F., Burke, R. and Westman, M., 2013. *Work-Life Balance: A Psychological Perspective*. 2nd ed. East Sussex: Psychology Press, pp.1-9.

Karatepe, O .and Uludag, O. (2007) Conflict, exhaustion, and motivation: A study of frontline employees in Northern Cyprus hotels. *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 26: 645 – 665.

Kaya, B. and Karatepe, O., 2020. Attitudinal and behavioral outcomes of work-life balance among hotel employees: The mediating role of psychological contract breach. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, [online] 42, pp.199-209. Available at: <<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1447677019301482>> [Accessed 20 July 2020].

Kelliher, C. (2016). Work-life balance. In A. Wilkinson, & S. Johnstone (Eds.), Encyclopedia of human resource management (pp. 242–243). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.

Kelliher, C., Richardson, J. and Boiarintseva, G., 2019. All of work? All of life? Reconceptualising work-life balance for the 21st century. *Human Resource Management Journal*, [online] 29(2), pp.97-112. Available at: <<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1748-8583.12215>> [Accessed 21 July 2020].

Kimura, D., 2016. Work and Life Balance “If We Are Not Happy Both in Work and out of Work, We Cannot Provide Happiness to Others”. *Frontiers in Pediatrics*, 4(1).

Lazar, I., Osoian, C. and Ratiu, P., 2010. The role of work-life balance practices in order to improve organizational performance. *European Research Studies Journal*, [online] 13(1). Available at: <<https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar/handle/123456789/31996>> [Accessed 22 October 2020].

Lewis, R., 2010. Work-Life Balance In Hospitality: Experiences From A Geneva-Based Hotel. *International Journal of Management & Information Systems (IJMIS)*, 14(5).

Lewis, S., Gambles, R. and Rapoport, R., 2007. The constraints of a ‘work–life balance’ approach: an international perspective. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, [online] 18(3), pp.360-373. Available at:

<<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09585190601165577?src=recsys&journalCode=rjh20>> [Accessed 7 August 2020].

Luo, Q., 2014, Younger workers look for balance. Retrieved March 19, 2016 from
http://www.thestandard.com.hk/news_detail.asp?art_id=150726&con_type=1

MacDonald, L., 2005. *Wellness At Work: Protecting And Promoting Employee Health And Wellbeing*. 1st ed. London, pp.3-30.

MacInnes, J. (2006) Work – life balance in Europe: A response to the baby bust or reward to the baby boomers? European Societies 8 (2): 223 – 249. DOI:
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14616690600644988> [Accessed 1 September 2020].

MacInnes, J., 2005. Work-Life Balance and the Demand for Reduction in Working Hours: Evidence from the British Social Attitudes Survey 2002. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, [online] 43(2), pp.273-295. Available at:
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1467-8543.2005.00355.x> [Accessed 3 August 2020].

Marriott, 2020. [online] Marriott International. Available at:
<https://www.marriott.com/default.mi> [Accessed 10 November 2020].

Mayer, M., 2014. *Marissa Mayer Defends Her Work from Home Ban*. [online] Business Insider. Available at: <https://www.businessinsider.in/Marissa-Mayer-Defends-Her-Work-From-Home-Ban/articleshow/21163413.cms> [Accessed 19 September 2020].

Meenakshi, P., Subrahmanyam, V. and Ravichandran, K., 2013. The Importance of Work Life Balance. *Journal of Business and Management*, [online] 14(3), pp.31-35. Available at: <<http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jbm/papers/Vol14-issue3/F01433135.pdf>> [Accessed 28 July 2020].

Mohanty, D. and Mohanty, S., (2014). An Empirical Study on the Employee Perception on Work-Life Balance in Hotel Industry with Special Reference to Odisha. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, [online] 2(2), pp.1-10. Available at: <http://jthmnet.com/journals/jthm/Vol_2_No_2_December_2014/5.pdf> [Accessed 3 November 2020].

Mohanty, D. and Mohanty, S., 2014. An Empirical Study on the Employee Perception on Work-Life Balance in Hotel Industry with Special Reference to Odisha. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, [online] 2(2), pp.65-81. Available at: <http://jthmnet.com/journals/jthm/Vol_2_No_2_December_2014/5.pdf> [Accessed 28 August 2020].

Myers, M.D. (2008) “Qualitative Research in Business & Management” SAGE Publications.

Naithani, P., 2010. Overview of Work-Life Balance Discourse and Its Relevance in Current Economic Scenario. *Asian Social Science*, [online] 6(6), pp.148-155. Available at: <https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2685805> [Accessed 28 July 2020].

Nelson-Horchler, J. 1991. The myth of the shiftless U.S. worker. *Industry Week*, 240(9): 42–44.

O'Connor, M. (2003) Top Challenges for Managers, Dublin: IMI Centre for Management Research.

Oliver, V, 2010, 301 Smart Answers to Tough Business Etiquette Questions, Skyhorse Publishing, New York USA.

Pookaiyaudom, G., 2015. Assessing Different Perceptions towards the Importance of a Work-life Balance: A Comparable Study between Thai and International Programme Students. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, [online] 174, pp.267-274. Available at: <<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042815007089>> [Accessed 27 July 2020].

Pradhan, R., Jena, L. and Kumari, I., 2016. Effect of Work–Life Balance on Organizational Citizenship Behaviour: Role of Organizational Commitment. *Global Business Review*, [online] 17(3_suppl), pp.15S-29S. Available at: <<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0972150916631071>> [Accessed 28 July 2020].

Presenza, A., Messeni Petruzzelli, A. and Natalicchio, A. (2019). Business Model Innovation for Sustainability. Highlights from the Tourism and Hospitality Industry. *Sustainability*,

[online] 11(1), p.212. Available at: <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/11/1/212/htm>

[Accessed 29 October. 2020].

Raja, S. and Stein, S., 2014. Work–Life Balance: History, Costs, and Budgeting for Balance. *Clinics in Colon and Rectal Surgery*, [online] 27(02), pp.071-074. Available at: <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4079063/>> [Accessed 28 July 2020].

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2012). Research Methods for Business Students. 6th edition. London: FT Prentice-Hall.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2016). Research methods for business students. 7th ed. Harlow: Pearson, pp.145-174.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A., 2017. *Research Methods For Business Students*. 8th ed. New York, pp.2-46.

Schoneck, N.M. (2018). Europeans' work and life- out of balance? An empirical test of assumptions from the "acceleration debate". *Time and Society*, 27(1), 3-39.

Smith, M., 2019. *Work Life Balance – The Grand Debate - Optimum Consulting*. [online] Optimum Consulting. Available at: <<http://www.ogroup.com.au/2019/01/08/work-life-balance-grand-debate/>> [Accessed 28 September 2020].

Sperance, C., 2020. *Marriott Throws Hat Into The Work-From-Hotel Ring*. [online] Skift. Available at: <https://skift.com/2020/10/28/marriott-throws-hat-into-the-work-from-hotel-ring/?fbclid=IwAR2VLoAIaG7nRG704Jonl3a5RCOp9_TZv8vh-KdFyID01eHAyr2wFHOqkjw> [Accessed 10 November 2020].

Spicker, P. (2011) Ethical covert research. *Sociology* 45(1): 118-133.

Stavrou, E. and Ierodiakonou, C., 2015. Entitlement to Work-Life Balance Support: Employee/Manager Perceptual Discrepancies and Their Effect on Outcomes. *Human Resource Management*, [online] 55(5), pp.845-869. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282002646_Entitlement_to_Work-Life_Balance_Support_EmployeeManager_Perceptual_Discrepancies_and_Their_Effect_on_Outcomes> [Accessed 28 July 2020].

Sutton, C. and David, M. (2004). SOCIAL RESEARCH THE BASICS. 1st ed. London, p.19.

Tariq, A., Aslam, H., Siddique, A. and Tanveer, A., 2012. Work-Life Balance as a Best Practice Model of Human Resource Management: A Win-Win Situational Tool for the Employees and Organizations. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, [online] 3(1), pp.577-590. Available at:<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260318359_Work-Life_Balance_as_a_Best_Practice_Model_of_Human_Resource_Management_A_Win-Win_Situational_Tool_for_the_Employees_and_Organizations> [Accessed 29 October 2020].

Turner, J. (2018). Literature Review. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, [online] 31(2), pp.113-117. Available at: <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.ezproxy.brighton.ac.uk/doi/full/10.1002/piq.21275> [Accessed 26 July. 2020].

Tuzunkan, D. and Altintas, V., 2018. *Contemporary Human Resources Management in The Tourism Industry*. 1st ed.

Wan, S. and Song, H. (2018). Forecasting turning points in tourism growth. *Annals of Tourism Research*, [online] 72(3), pp.156-167. Available at: <https://www-sciencedirect-com.ezproxy.brighton.ac.uk/science/article/pii/S016073831830077X> [Accessed 30 October. 2020].

Wiles, R., Crow, G., Charles, V. and Heath, S. (2007). "Informed Consent and the Research Process: Following Rules or Striking Balances? Sociological Research" Online, [online] 12(2), pp.1-12.

Wilson A (2015) A guide to phenomenological research. *Nursing Standard*. 29, 34, 38-43.

Wong, S. and Ko, A., 2009. Exploratory study of understanding hotel employees' perception on work-life balance issues. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, [online] 28(2), pp.195-203. Available at:

<<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0278431908000595>> [Accessed 3 August 2020].

Wong, S. and Ko, A., 2009. Exploratory study of understanding hotel employees' perception on work-life balance issues. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, [online] 28(2), pp.195-203. Available at:
<<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0278431908000595>> [Accessed 1 September 2020].

World Tourism Organisation (2016). UNWTO Annual Report | World Tourism Organization UNWTO. [online] www2.unwto.org. Available at: <http://www2.unwto.org/annual-reports> [Accessed 10 October. 2020].

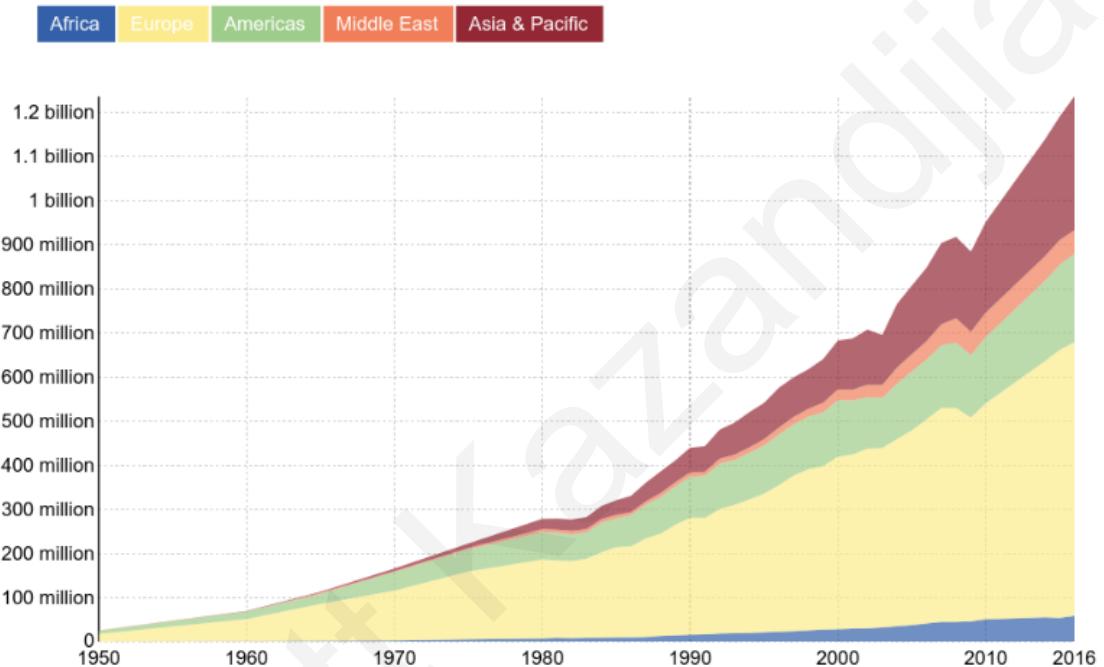
World Tourism Organisation (2017). UNWTO Annual Report | World Tourism Organization UNWTO. [online] www2.unwto.org. Available at: <http://www2.unwto.org/annual-reports> [Accessed 29 October. 2020].

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Tourism growth over the years

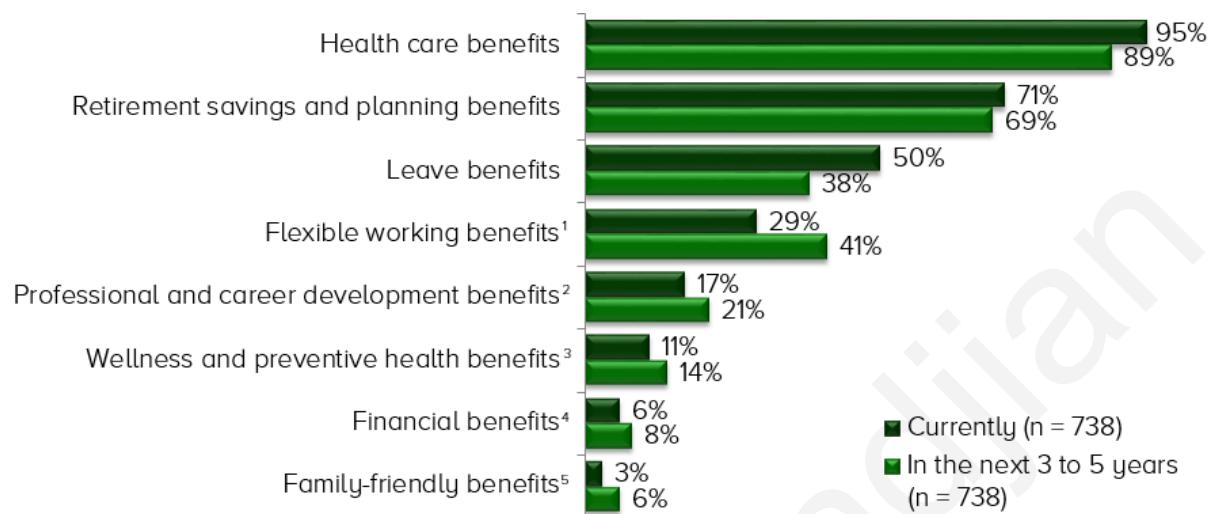
International tourist arrivals by world region

OurWorld
in Data



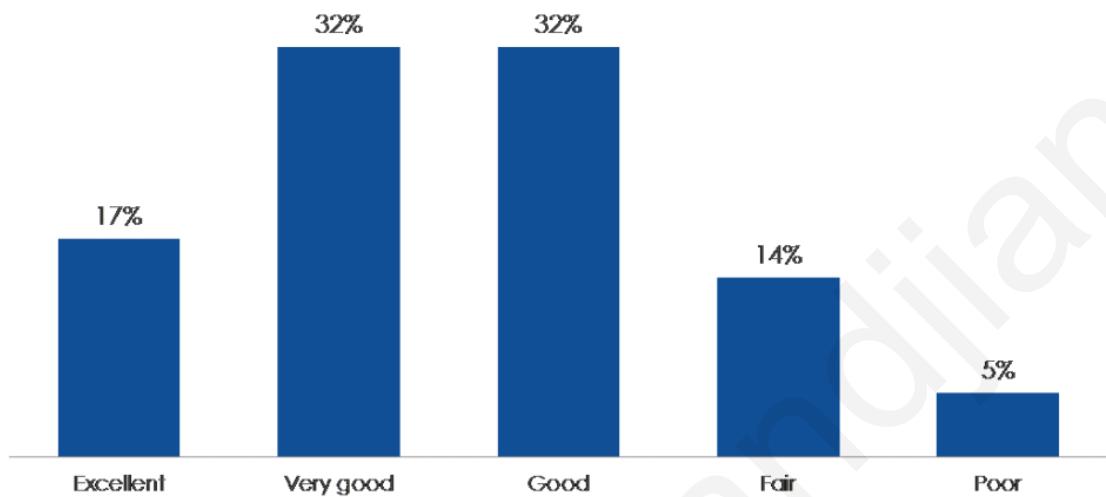
(UNWTO, 2016)

Appendix 2: Ways to attract employees:



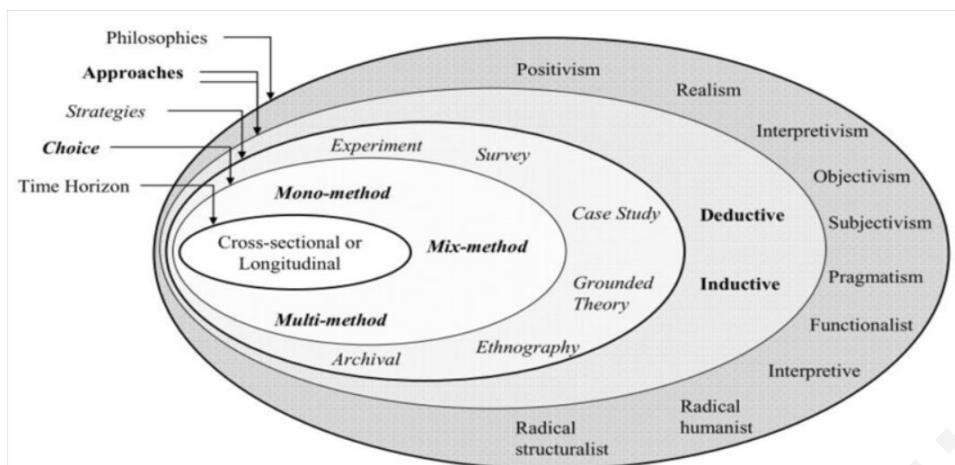
Appendix 3: Culture of work-life balance

How would you describe the work-life balance at your company?



Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute and Greenwald & Associates., 2017 Health and Workplace Benefits Surveys

Appendix4: Research Onion



Appendix 5: Interview Transcript on manager one:

-Researcher – Hello, my name is Barett Kazandjian and I am a student at the university of Cyprus studying Human Resource management and I’m finishing my master’s degree. I am working on a research regarding work-life balance in hotels and customers perceptions towards it. The purpose is to collect primary data for my thesis by conducting interviews from managers and surveys from employees to get a few answers for my research questions. If you have spare time, is it possible to assist me with the interview?

-Manager - How much time will it take approximately?

-Researcher - approximately half an hour.

-Manager – Okay, let’s start!

-Researcher - Before we get started, I would like to mention that as the interview is voluntary, you can withdraw at any point during the interview. Also, an informed consent will be given – how the data will be collected and used will be explained. Furthermore, privacy and anonymity will be secured as your name will not be identified. Finally, I would like to ask your permission to record the interview just to get more in- depth answers during my analysis. Your name or recording will not be published.

-Manager - That is fine with me.

-Researcher - Thank you!

-Researcher - To start with, I would like to ask you, to define what work-life balance means to you.

-Manager - For me, is that Work should be organized in a timely manner so that you have the time to spend for you and the family. A balance has to be created to switch off, free your mind of work and can concentrate also in private matters.

-Researcher – Yes, I agree. How important is the concept of work-life balance for your employees do you believe?

-Manager - In my view, the work life balance factor needs to be more introduced and explained to the employee. What is the meaning and what is the result out of it.

-Researcher – So, you believe that employees don't really know about the term?

-Manager – I believe that the term is something “new”, so not all employees will have good knowledge about it. By introducing it to the employees, I believe that it will have a bigger importance.

-Researcher – After having this said, do you believe that the concept of work-life balance has become a main differentiator for employees? and why?

-Manager – It has, but it could be promoted even more strongly to have even greater meaning for the society. Convince the old guard, owners who are believing that only work brings you success and forget your private life.

- Researcher – Does your hotel promotes and supports the work-life balance of employees?

-Manager – When I am running the hotel, I make sure this is in place. Not all managers or hotels though support their workers work-life balance.

- Researcher – So, how do you make sure that work-life balance is in place? Do you have any policies or practices that your hotel provides to support the term?

-Manager – Policies have not been implemented, but with common sense, with trainings and team activities it can be supported and benefit their work-life balance.

-Researcher – What are the reasons that you focus on work-life balance?

-Manager – Okay, employees are more energetic, more proactive, engage more in the operation and more innovative which all this has a result in more productive employees which I believe it is one of the main reasons hotel invest in the concept. Mentioned these facts, work-life balance can be a motivation factor as well since it minimizes the conflicts among work and life responsibilities. So, employers seeking to assist employees minimize their conflicts among work and life, will enhance their relationship and make them more committed towards their organizations.

-Researcher – Now, what is the impact of implementing work life balance both to your employees and business?

-Manager - It can bring a better working spirit into the operation, by having more inspired and happier employees' services can be consistent and even better. By consistency, reputation of a hotel can be improved, and more revenues can come into the operation.

-Researcher – Thank you for that. Moving forward, do you believe that the concept of work-life balance can also have disadvantages as well? And what are those?

-Manager - Disadvantages in the beginning due to the fact by convincing the people to do the change. By living the work life balance by yourself this will make the change by advising your employees the positives.

-Researcher – Okay then, do you believe employees find it important for a business to support the concept of work-life balance? Yes, no and why?

-Manager - Yes, it will reflect on the business, as mentioned before consistency in service, customer care etc. the reputation of the hotel will bring return of business. Apart from customer care, it will help with employees care as well. When employees feel that the business is taking care and into consideration their employee's personal lives as well, then they will be more committed towards the hotel which is why it's important for employees.

-Researcher – Since you say it is an important factor for them, do you believe work-life balance plays an important role on employee's decision makings?

-Manager - It can, the employee will have a more open mind. I believe employees prefer work that can provide them a better work-life balance. So yes, it should be one of the important factors during decision making.

-Researcher – How do you think employees evaluate work choices? Is work-life balance within their decision?

-Manager – Employees now, yes have started to think about their work-life balance so it will be a “theme” that they will be evaluating when searching where to work. Apart from salary, benefits and work conditions, work-life balance is the other big factor to look about nowadays.

-Researcher – Do you believe that work-life balance will gain higher interest in the future?

-Manager – Yes.

-Researcher – Why is that?

-Manager – Because a balance in work will contribute also in your life and health.

-Researcher - From your personal experience, is the turnover affected because of work life balance?

-Manager - It is hard to say, but with the implementation I foresee that turn over can be reduced as employees will be willing and choosing such businesses that provide work-life balance. It depends how it will be introduced to the employees and what benefits it carries.

-Research - Do you think that the hospitality industry has a poor work-life balance?

Why?

-Manager – Hospitality industry when compared to other industries it is obvious that it has a poorer work-life balance. Work-life balance is certainly one of the major matters because of the nature of the hotels that operate all day long and the fact that there is shortage of employees in the industry, makes it a challenge to improve the concept.

-Researcher – Okay, good. Are there any posts/departments in the business that have worse work-life balance in comparison to other departments?

-Manager – If work-life balance is implemented, all departments should benefit from it, either because of improves teamwork or reduced hours. But indeed, there are departments that have a worse work-life balance in comparison to other departments. It could be mentioned that departments that have one to one communication or direct service with customers may sometimes face a worse work-life balance.

-Researcher – How about during off peak seasons? Is the work-life balance there improved or affected?

-Manager – Yes, for sure. In summer months especially, when there is a lot of work, employees work long hours which affects their work-life balance. In winter lets say, we can be more flexible.

- Researcher - How do you deal with the fact that the hospitality industry especially in Cyprus is a seasonal job? Where the peak season is during summer months and at winter there is not a lot of work?

-Manager - The hospitality industry in Cyprus has changed within the last 15 – 20 years, whilst in the early 2000 Cyprus was promoted as an all-year-round destination and most of the hotels have been open during the winter period, with the exception of tourist hot spots i.e., Aya Napa, Paphos area. Favorable arrangements with the tour operators brought tourist during the winter season to Cyprus, also the than CTO spend a lot of money in promoting the island i.e skiing in the morning in the mountains and in the afternoon spend the time on the beach. Main arrivals during this time where the Scandinavian markets, Britain and German speaking countries. It was, fleeing from the cold to the more favorable temperatures of Cyprus, the Green and the possibility to explore the countryside at this time.

But more and more destination came in to play a vital role in changing the habits of tourists to come to Cyprus, i.e. more travels went to the destinations like Egypt, Middle East and Far East. The main reasons for the change were more lucrative offers from the travel industry (tour operators, airlines, etc.) and Cyprus has been seen more and more as an expensive destination. By this decline of tourist arrivals, the hospitality industry started to change, first

measures were taken to “renovate” the properties but in most instances, this was only a camouflage. Minor repairs were made, but the main reason was to hold the running cost low. More and more of the hoteliers started to do the scheme and less rooms where available and the tour operators started to reduce the offers to Cyprus.

This had another impact i.e. workforce, as most of the employees in the old days where employed on a full year around basis, more and more of seasonal employment came in force. In addition, in June 2004 Cyprus became member of the EU and therefore people of the EU where entitled to work in Cyprus without a work permit, which before the membership of the EU this was common. The hospitality industry adapted very quickly to this change and hired more and more people from the EU especially from the eastern country members, as they have been seen as cheaper labor than the local work force.

So, at the current situation, the hospitality industry is working on a seasonal adaption, which means for the hoteliers to organize in more efficient way the labour force. It has pro and con's working with seasonal staff. Pro = labour costs can be calculated in a better way and controlled, can employ when business is needed, etc. Con's = it can happen that due to the changes in laborer's, inconsistencies in services can be observed, whilst running over a full year working as a team has more advantages i.e., customer service, consistency in serving the product etc.

In my personal opinion Cyprus should promote themselves again as a full year around destination with more support of the government in promoting in the right countries for the destination, the right sectors (hiking, medical tourism, adventure tourism, etc.) more flexible with tour operators and airlines and the main point become cheaper. By meaning this is to have reasonable prices compare to other destinations. Whilst Cyprus is an island and goods have to be imported some items which are locally produced items can also play a part. In regards of the labor force in the hospitality industry, the current hospitality colleges need to be upgraded to be more attractive i.e., bring in foreign lectures to the classes, adapt to the new technologies in the industry, keep the base what it means hospitality but with an open mind, accept more foreign students, etc.

-Researcher – Thank you for your detailed answer. Finally, I would like to ask you, now in these difficult times, with the new pandemic, how do hotels cope with COVID-19? Have they implemented any new measures?

-Manager - The hotels overall in the world where struggling, due to this virus which nobody has experienced before. A change of thinking in the field of hygiene has/had to come into effect (sanitation, wearing masks, distance, airing of the property, etc.) Coping with the measure implemented by governments were also big hurdles, but most of them applied and implemented. But due constant changes by the authorities confused also the hoteliers. I.e., in Germany hotels can be open but only can have businesspeople hosted, tourists are not allowed. Hotels tried to be creative in attracting customers, but again it depends of the regulation of each country. Another big issue is the loss of income, which is also a big burden. Some countries assist to overcome the financial loss i.e., in Germany 75% of the month income of 2019, this was introduced in November. But how long this scheme is running is unknown. It helps some of the hoteliers but not all of them.

-Researcher – This was the end of our interview. I would like to thank you very much for your time.

-Manager - Perfect, does that help?

-Researcher - Of course, thanks a lot. See you.