



WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND WORK-RELATED ATTITUDES OF EMPLOYEES: CASE STUDY IN SERBIAN HOTEL INDUSTRY

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Abstract:

The hotel industry is recognized in the labor market as insufficiently attractive for potential employees. Accordingly, hotel management must pay special attention to ensuring a balance between business and family obligations of employees, to create more favorable working conditions. Respecting the family obligations of employees results in positive work-related attitudes toward employees. This paper aims to investigate the nature of the connection between work-life balance and the work-related attitudes of employees. The research was conducted on a sample of 90 employees in three-, four- and five-star hotels in Serbia. The testing of the set research hypotheses was carried out using a non-parametric test for comparing groups, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. Using a non-parametric test to compare groups, a difference in the level of experience of work-life balance between male and female respondents was determined. It was also noted that men rated work-life balance worse than women. The results indicate a strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation between work-life balance and work-related attitudes of employees. Work-life balance contributes positively to the work-related attitudes of employees.

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INTRODUCTION

The hotel industry is a labor-intensive industry (Ognjanović, 2017) that bases business activities on the knowledge, skills, and abilities of employees to effectively use existing tangible and intangible assets in order to ensure complete guest satisfaction and experience. The hotel industry failed to build the image of an attractive employer in the labor market (Ognjanović, 2021). The characteristics such as hotel operation 24/7, the impact of shift work on the health of employees, insufficient job security, and weaker career development opportunities (Hewagama, 2015), did not contribute to making this industry attractive to potential employees. On the other hand, the accelerated development of the hotel industry led to an increase in the demand for a highly qualified workforce (Kong, Cheung, & Song, 2012).



This deficiency imposes a very complex task on human resources managers in order to succeed in creating more favorable working conditions. In the field of human resource management (HRM), there was an opinion that if hotel management wants to retain employees, it must improve morale, commitment, and satisfaction, and reduce stress and work-related problems of employees (Wilkinson, 2008). This leads to the conclusion that hotel management must think about these challenges and limitations, where they must prioritize activities that will ensure sustainable development (Pasamar, & Cabrera, 2013; Mitrović, Knežević, & Milašinović, 2022). One of the HRM activities, which is becoming particularly popular in modern business conditions, is work-life balance.

Work-life balance has emerged as an interesting topic in the last two decades as a result of significant work intensification, caused by economic uncertainty, organizational restructuring, and increased business competition (Hughes, & Bozionelos, 2007). An individual's perception of work-life balance is conditioned by job satisfaction, family satisfaction, life satisfaction, family functioning, and organizational commitment (Helmle, Botero, & Seibold, 2014). Empirical findings suggest that employees who feel good and do not experience excessive stress, both at work and at home, are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs (Hughes, & Bozionelos, 2007; Helmle *et al.*, 2014). Analyzing the possibility of harmonizing business and family obligations of employees and taking the necessary steps to improve the situation is directly related to organizational success (Hughes & Bozionelos, 2007). Appreciation and understanding of work-life balance are especially important for the hotel industry, whose entire offer is largely based on the knowledge and skills of employees. By developing work-life balance, hotel management can improve the attractiveness of the hotel industry in the labor market and influence employee satisfaction.

What is recognized in the literature as a problem, when it comes to HRM in hotels, is that employers ignore the issue of work-life balance (Wilkinson, 2008). On the other hand, employees in the hotel industry suffer from a lack of work-life balance (Kaya & Karatepe, 2020). The situation is further complicated by the fact that with the lack of professionals, the pressures on existing employees are increasing and additional engagement is required from them (Wilkinson, 2008). Considering the unfavorable characteristics of the hotel industry on the labor market, the issue of work-life balance should be specially addressed by human resources managers.

Several research gaps have been identified in the literature. Firstly, owners and managers do not have enough knowledge about the factors with the help of which work-life balance can be managed (Helmle *et al.*, 2014). For this reason, the study analyzes the impact of work-life balance on the work-related attitudes of employees. The existing literature on work-life balance indicates that the impact of flexible working and family-friendly policies is not clearly understood and that differences at the level of different industries and different levels of the organization have been observed but not empirically investigated: it is simply assumed that there is a positive correlation between strong work-life balance programs and employee loyalty to the company (Moore, 2007). This research gap is attempted to be overcome by conducting research in the hotel industry and seeks to examine the importance of work-life balance among hotel employees. Secondly, a large part of researchers in the field of work-life balance have limited their research in the Anglo-Saxon context (Pasamar, & Cabrera, 2013). The concept of work-life balance is not only a western phenomenon, but due to globalization, it has also spread to the east (Rehman, & Roomi, 2012), so research needs to be conducted in this context as well. Thirdly, it has been noted in the literature that work-life balance has been studied from the aspect of the role of women in the family (Burnett, Gatrell, Cooper, & Sparrow, 2010; Rehman, & Roomi, 2012). Work-life balance is an issue of greatest concern to both genders (Hughes, & Bozionelos, 2007).



For these purposes, the research was conducted in an emerging economy (Serbia) and includes both male and female respondents.

Most research in this area has focused on the consequences that work-life balance has on the individual and the organization (Helmle *et al.*, 2014). Previous studies analyzed the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance (Soomro, Breitenecker, & Shah, 2018), work-life balance, and job performance (Talukder, 2022). However, the relationship between work-life balance and employee attitude has not been analyzed in the literature. Also, previous research did not focus on the hotel industry, which is particularly interesting since it is not recognized as attractive in the labor market. The commitment of the hotel management to create working conditions that will contribute to the understanding of family obligations also affects the shaping of the behavior and attitudes of employees. Hotel management must 'focus on the wishes and needs of employees in such a way that employees perceive that the outputs are greater than the inputs and they, therefore, feel obliged to respond positively to the organization with an appropriate attitude, and its resulting impact on organizational performance' (Tortosa Edo, Llorens-Monzonis, Moliner-Tena, & Sánchez García, 2015, p.488). By observing and modeling employee behavior and undertaking activities to improve employee attitudes, it is possible to influence employee results such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and service performance (Li, & Huang, 2017). Therefore, the paper aims to investigate the nature of the relationship between work-life balance and the work-related attitudes of employees.

In addition to the introduction and conclusion, the paper consists of three parts. The second part provides an overview of the most significant aspects of work-life balance, as well as an overview of previous research that dealt with the topic of work-life balance, with a special analysis of the connection with the attitudes of employees. The third part includes a description of the used research instrument as well as a description of the observed sample. The fourth part presents the results of the research with a discussion of the obtained results. In the conclusion, the results of the research are summarized, the practical implications and limitations of the research are presented, and suggestions for the implementation of future research are given.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Work-life balance in human resources management

The first studies on work-life balance appeared in the 1970s as a 'women's issue', and then in the 1980s, studies directed towards this topic began to focus on the development of effective employment/retention policies (Moore, 2007). The motivation for studying work-life balance stems from the need to promote flexible work for employees, with the basic goal of making the division of labor in the family and caring for children "gender-neutral" (Burnett *et al.*, 2010). A good work-life balance implies that employees use the possibilities of flexible working hours programs to balance their work and other obligations outside of work (Moore, 2007). Work and family are seen as two key sources of people's stress because they require most of a person's time, attention, and energy during the day (Young, McLeod, & Carpenter, 2022). The purpose of establishing a work-life balance is for employees to find the rhythm that will enable them to combine work with their non-work responsibilities, activities, and aspirations (Hughes, & Bozionelos, 2007). This will contribute to the improvement of the employee's quality of life as well as organizational efficiency (Pasamar, & Cabrera, 2013).



Work-life balance is defined in a variety of ways. It is the level of satisfaction that individuals feel when they can function both at home and work, with a minimal conflict between both roles (Helmle *et al.*, 2014). Work-life balance can also be defined as a measure in which the efficiency and satisfaction of an individual in work and family roles are compatible with the priorities of the individual's life role at a given moment (Helmle *et al.*, 2014). Moore (2007:386) defines a good work-life balance "as a situation in which workers feel that they are capable of balancing their work and non-work commitments, and, for the most part, do so". The primary theoretical explanation for the unique experiences of employees regarding work-life balance can be linked to social role theory (Thrasher, Wynne, Baltes, & Bramble, 2022). According to this theory, all people have different social roles at any given time, with each role defined as a set of specific expectations that drive behavior and cognition within those roles (Thrasher *et al.*, 2022). Young *et al.* (2022) observe work-life balance from a psychological aspect and connect the analysis of work-life balance with occupational stress theory.

The potential benefits of increasing managers' awareness of the need to develop work-life balance are of particular importance, given that previous research has shown that family-to-work conflict and work-to-family conflict affect the emotional well-being of owners and employees, their job, and firm satisfaction performance (Helmle *et al.*, 2014). The authors (Stoilova, Ilieva-Trichkova, & Bieri, 2020) believe that how employees will react to business and family obligations and establish a balance between them depends on the characteristics of human capital. Most of the work performed depends on the action of knowledge, ability, and skills of employees to use tangible and intangible assets. The motivation of employees to perform their work tasks in the best way is the result of the psychological outcome of conflict/stress that occurs as a result of (in)balance between life and work (Rehman, & Roomi, 2012). For this reason, HR managers must monitor and analyze factors that affect the balance between work and family responsibilities. Research shows that employees who are under stress and who have not established a work-life balance are more likely to make mistakes and take sick leave (Wilkinson, 2008). The development of work-life balance also affects the reduction of company costs. A reduced employee turnover rate results in financial savings and can be a motivation for companies to invest in work-life balance (Wilkinson, 2008).

Certain factors hindered the development of the quality of work-life balance. Pasamar and Cabrera (2013) believe that decision-makers often do not pay enough attention to the dynamics of the environment in which they operate. That is why researchers on work-life balance must pay more attention to the institutional environment. Barriers to the development of work-life balance in companies are also business cultures that promote and reward long-term work and high organizational commitment, to the detriment of other company obligations (Wilkinson, 2008). The development of work-life balance can also be hindered by managers who do not have a developed awareness that understanding and respecting the needs of employees (both business and family) can positively affect their behavior and actions in the company.

Work-life balance has been considered rather narrowly because it was originally considered that this issue refers to individuals, especially women, who are employed in companies and have family responsibilities (Hughes, & Bozionelos, 2007). Rehman and Roomi (2012) conduct research among men and women and conclude that strategic planning, organizing, and delegating may be the most efficient strategies used by women to ensure work-life balance. Stoilova *et al.* (2020) put the level of education among women and men as the focus of work-life balance research. They concluded that higher education increases the likelihood of considering work-life balance as an important factor in job choice for men, while lower education reduces the chances of considering this factor for women.



Helmle *et al.* (2014) concluded that spousal support did not influence individual perceptions of work-life balance. It is assumed that work-life balance can be a factor valued differently by men and women in the hotel industry precisely because of the working conditions. This primarily refers to the impact of shifts on family obligations as well as the nature of the hotel's seasonal business. These characteristics could be particularly unfavorable for women. According to the above, it would be useful to investigate the assessment of work-life balance among employed men and women in the hotel industry.

Hypothesis 1: There is a statistically significant difference in the level of perceived work-life balance between men and women in hotels

Work-life balance and work-related attitudes of employees

Employee attitudes are defined as "the extent to which members of a work organization can satisfy important individual needs through their experiences in the organization" (Karia, & Abu Hassan Asaari, 2019:281). The attitudes can also be seen as the result of the reaction of individuals to the objective and experienced characteristics of the work organization (Karia, & Abu Hassan Asaari, 2019). It is considered that employee attitudes precede the behavior of employees and have several psychological functions for employees: they help to form knowledge, define strategies for solving problems, to organize memory (Talukder, Vickers, & Khan, 2018). It can be concluded that the contribution to the development of work-life balance is reflected through the provision of the well-being of employees (both physical and mental), which has an impact on the results of the organization (Helmle *et al.*, 2014).

Managerial support helps employees to foster positive attitudes towards their organization, which in turn affects employee engagement (Kaur, & Randhawa, 2021). Talukder *et al.* also agree with this conclusion (2018), looking at managers' attitudes and behavior as drivers of employees' ability to maintain work-life balance. For this reason, Moore (2007) indicates the need to analyze the development of work-life balance among managers. The same author, based on the conducted research, concludes that managers are better able to maintain work-life balance compared to operational workers and focus more on achieving status, while operational workers are more focused on achieving personal satisfaction (Moore, 2007). The relationship between managers and employees regarding the provision of work-life balance should be monitored and analyzed in particular, since the results of the research by the authors Hughes and Bozionelos (2007) show that if the work-life balance is not applied in the right way, it can be a source of negative attitudes of employees towards company management.

A certain number of authors (Soomro *et al.*, 2018; Jain, Le Sante, Viswesvaran, & Belwal, 2021) observe employee attitudes through job satisfaction. Talukder *et al.* (2018) state that job satisfaction is one of the most frequently studied aspects in the field of work-life balance. Hughes and Bozionelos (2007) conclude that work-life imbalance is not only a source of concern but also a major source of employee dissatisfaction.

Research shows that the development of an appropriate work-life balance policy contributes to ensuring employee loyalty to the company and positive attitudes towards work (Moore, 2007). By undertaking activities that will improve employees' attitudes, it is possible to ensure an influence on the behavior of employees (Talukder *et al.*, 2018), and thus on the way to achieving the company's goals. Employee imbalance in any form, when work spills over into family life or when family life spills over into work, is a potential pattern of stress, dissatisfaction, and unconstructive work attitudes of employees (Soomro *et al.*, 2018) because organizational work-family resources are usually applied in response to the wishes and values of employees.



These resources are expected to help with stress resistance, resulting in positive effects for employees. Based on the stated position, the authors Talukder *et al.* (2018) and Talukder (2022) indicates the connection between organizational work-family resources and employee attitudes. That is why the recommendation of the authors Soomro *et al.* (2018) is to determine the intensity of the conflict between life and business obligations so that it does not become a permanent stressor that leads to poorer performance and irresponsible work attitudes. Young *et al.* (2022) conclude that work-life balance is related to the level of employees' occupational commitment. Considering the characteristics of the hotel industry (labor-intensive activity, insufficiently good working conditions, high turnover of employees) as well as the crucial role of work-life balance in the well-being of employees (Karkoulian, Srouf & Sinan, 2016), there is a need to examine the impact of work-life balance on work-related attitudes of employees in hotels. Based on what has been defined, the following hypotheses have been proposed:

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive, strong, and statistically significant correlation between the work-life balance and work-related attitudes of employees.

Hypothesis 3: Work-life balance contributes positively to the work-related attitudes of employees.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Research instrument and sample description

For the research, employees in three-, four- and five-star hotels in Serbia were surveyed. The information about the number of hotels, names, and the category was taken from the website of the Ministry of Trade, Tourism, and Telecommunications of the Republic of Serbia. The information on email addresses was taken from the hotels' websites. The employee survey was conducted in October 2020. The questionnaire was sent to 273 addresses. After an online survey, a telephone survey, and an oral survey, the number of respondents was reduced to 90 employees, giving a response rate of 33%.

The survey was conducted using a questionnaire that contains three parts. The first part includes socio-demographic information about the respondents and employees of the hotel. The second part refers to the items based on which the development of work-life balance is analyzed. This part includes three items that are defined based on the research conducted in the papers of Tanwar and Prasad (2016) and Zhu, Wang, Yu, Hu, Wen, and Liu (2014). The third part of the questionnaire refers to the attitudes of employees. It includes four items that are defined based on the research conducted in the papers of Engstrom, Westnes, and Westnes (2003) and Nemec Rudež and Mihalič (2007).

**Table 1.** Sample description

Socio-demographic characteristics	Absolute number	% representation in the sample
<i>Hotel category</i>		
3-stars	54	60%
4-stars	32	36%
5-stars	4	4%
Σ	90	100%
<i>Gender</i>		
Men	32	36%
Women	58	64%
Σ	90	100%
<i>Vocational education</i>		
Secondary school	14	16%
High school	32	36%
University	29	32%
Master/Magister	15	17%
Σ	90	100%
<i>Number of years working in the hotel industry</i>		
up to 5 years	33	37%
from 6 to 10 years	28	31%
more than 10 years	29	32%
Σ	90	100%

Source: Author's calculation

Table 1 shows the sample according to the observed socio-demographic characteristics. In the observed sample, the largest number of surveyed employees work in a 3-star hotel (60%). Women respondents are more dominant in the sample (64%), compared to the participation of the male respondents (36%). Looking at the vocational education of the respondents, the highest share is held by the respondents with high school (36%) and a university degree (32%). By observing the characteristic "number of years of work in the hotel industry", almost equal participation of employees with work experience of "up to 5 years" was recorded; "from 6 to 10 years" and "more than 10 years".

Methods

To process the collected data, the statistical program SPSS, Statistical Package for Social Sciences, was used. To determine statistical significance, a confidence interval of $\alpha=0.05$ was used. First, the sample was described based on the results of descriptive statistics. Then, a reliability analysis was carried out to determine the reliability of the used statements. The testing of the set of research hypotheses was carried out using a non-parametric test for comparing groups (Hypothesis 1), correlation analysis (Hypothesis 2), and regression analysis (Hypothesis 3).



RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Descriptive statistics, normality of sample distribution and reliability analysis

The mean value of the independent variable work-life balance is Mean = 4.51, while the mean value of the dependent variable work-related attitudes of employees is Mean = 4.73. The higher value of the standard deviation is recorded by the work-life balance variable (SD = 0.69). Observed by gender, men employed in hotels rate work-life balance worse than women. The mean for men is 4.24, while for women Mean is 4.66. The obtained skewness values for the observed two variables are negative, which means that the results are distributed in such a way that they are closer to higher values. Most of the kurtosis results are positive, indicating that the distribution is more peaked than normal. The results of descriptive statistics and correlation analysis are shown in Table 4.

The normality of the sample distribution was not proven. To check the normality of the distribution, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used, since the sample size is greater than 50 units. The value of statistical significance for the observed variables is $p = 0.000$, so the empirical distribution cannot be approximated as normal.

The reliability and consistency of the items are measured based on the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The value of this coefficient above 0.7 indicates high reliability and consistency of the used items (Nunnally, 1978). Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the entire model is 0.776, which means that the reliability of the observed items is at an acceptable level.

Non-parametric test for comparison of groups

To test the difference in the level of experience of work-life balance between the male and female hotel employees, a non-parametric test is used to compare groups - the Mann-Whitney U test. The non-parametric test was used since the normality of the sample distribution has not been proven. The Mann-Whitney U test is applied to test the difference between two independent groups on a continuous scale (Pallant, 2017). The test results are shown in Table 2, while the Ranks results are shown in Table 3.

Table 2. Mann-Whitney U test results

Variables	Total self esteem
Mann-Whitney U	661.50
Wilcoxon W	1189.50
Z	-2.43
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.015

Source: Author's calculation

The results shown in Table 2 show that **Hypothesis 1 is supported**, which means that there is a statistically significant difference in the level of experienced work-life balance between the men and women employed in the hotels ($p = 0.015$). Based on the Mean Rank values, shown in Table 3, it can be concluded that work-life balance has a higher value among women (Mean Rank = 50.09) than among



men (Mean Rank = 37.17). Mean values of work-life balance were calculated, especially for women and especially for men. The mean work-life balance for women is 4.66, while the Mean work-life balance for men is 4.24.

Table 3. Ranks

Sex	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Men	32	37.17	1189.50
Women	58	50.09	2905.50

Source: Author's calculation

Correlation analysis

The direction and strength of the relationship between work-life balance and work-related attitudes of employees are examined by correlation analysis. Correlation analysis is carried out using Spearman's rho coefficient, considering that the normality of the distribution has not been proven. If the correlation coefficient ranges from 0 to 0.29 (or from 0 to -0.29), it is a weak correlation between the variables; if it ranges from 0.30 to 0.49 (or from -0.30 to -0.49), it is a medium correlation, and if this coefficient is greater than 0.50 (or -0.50), there is a strong correlation between the variables (Pallant, 2017).

Table 4. Results of descriptive statistics and correlation analysis

Variables	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis		Work-life balance	Attitudes of employee
			Statis.	St. err	Statis.	St. err		
Work-life balance	4.51	0.69	-2.07	0.25	6.66	0.50	1	
Attitudes of employee	4.73	0.47	-1.77	0.25	2.72	0.50	0.514**	1

Source: Author's calculation

Based on the results of the correlation analysis, shown in Table 4, it can be concluded that **Hypothesis 2 is supported**, that is, there is a positive, strong, and statistically significant correlation between work-life balance and work-related attitudes of employees. The Spearman's rho value ($\rho = 0.514$; $p = 0.000$) indicates that an increase in work-life balance by 1 unit leads to an increase in work-related attitudes of employees by 0.514 units and vice versa.



Regression analysis

Analysis of the impact of work-life balance on the work-related attitudes of employees is performed using simple regression analysis. The application of this analysis implies the fulfillment of certain assumptions: autocorrelations and multicollinearity. Autocorrelation is observed based on the value of the Durbin-Watson statistic, which should not be greater than 4. Multicollinearity indicates a high degree of correlation between variables. It is measured based on the value of the VIF coefficient, which should not be greater than 5, and the value of Tolerance, which should be greater than 0.10 (Pallant, 2017). The assumptions of the regression analysis for the observed model are fulfilled. The results of the regression analysis are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Results of regression analysis

Variables	β	t	Sig.
Work-life balance	0.434	4.52	0.000**

Source: Author's calculation

Dependent variable: Work-related attitudes of employees

*Significant: ** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$*

$R^2 = 0.189$

$F = 20.47$

$DW = 1.48$

$VIF = 1$

$p = 0.000$

Based on the presented results of the regression analysis, it can be concluded that **Hypothesis 3 is supported**, that is, work-life balance positively contributes to the work-related attitudes of employees ($p = 0.000$). The value of the coefficient of determination R^2 is 0.189, which means that 19% of the variability of work-related attitudes of employees is explained by the regression model, while the rest is influenced by other factors. The value of Adjusted R Square is 0.179, while the F statistic is 20.47. Based on the value of the β coefficient, it can be concluded that an increase in work-life balance by one standard deviation leads to an increase in work-related attitudes of employees by 0.434 standard deviation units.

Discussion of results

Having in mind the observed research gaps in the literature, the contribution of the paper is reflected in the following. First, the research was conducted in the hotel industry, which is recognized as labor-intensive and where dominant resources are employed in the process of providing hotel services. That is why it is important to determine the factors that affect the attitude of employees, to improve their engagement and thus work results. As the work environment in the hospitality industry changes rapidly, managers need an effective tool to ensure employee attitude and employee satisfaction. (Borovčanin, Kilibarda, Milošević, & Knežević, 2020). One of those tools, as the research results show, is work-life balance. The importance of work-life balance should be especially analyzed and monitored by hotel managers, bearing in mind that it is characteristic of the hotel industry that employment relationships are significantly different compared to other industries (Manolopoulos, Peitzika, Mamakou & Myloni, 2022).



Second, the research was conducted in an emerging country, thus providing a theoretical contribution to the literature since research on the work-life balance variable is being extended to the eastern context. In emerging countries, the position of employees is different compared to employees in developed countries, which further emphasizes the importance of activities/variables that can improve the attitude and satisfaction of employees. Third, the research deals with the analysis of work-life balance among employed men and women in the hotel industry. This complements the perceived lack of research and contributes to the analysis of employed men, not only women in the hotel industry.

The results of applying a non-parametric test for comparing groups show that there is a difference in the experience of work-life balance between the men and women in the hotel industry. The women rate work-life balance better, which indicates better management commitment to working conditions for women. The results are consistent with the results of research (Hughes, & Bozionelos, 2007; Rehman, & Roomi, 2012; Stoilova *et al.*, 2020), which claim that there is a difference in the experience of work-life between the genders. Also, the findings are contrary to the results reached by Rasmussen *et al.* (2020) that the satisfaction of work-life balance is similar for men and women. The results should also be considered in the context of the Covid crisis. Due to being overloaded with family responsibilities, it is assumed that managers understood the responsibilities of women, which was not the case for men. Results of the research lead us to the conclusion that it is necessary to analyze the work-life balance between men and women separately to identify certain areas that need normative changes as well as policy measures aimed at greater gender equality (Stoilova *et al.*, 2020). Understanding the difference in valuing work-life balance between men and women can be a useful tool for managers to improve employee productivity, innovation, and employee attitudes (Gursoy, Chi, & Karadag, 2013).

The results of the research also show that the balance between private and business life determines the attitude of employees towards working in a hotel. Such results are consistent with the findings of the authors (Moore, 2007; Talukder *et al.*, 2018; Talukder, 2022). Management must develop work-life balance for employees because otherwise, this factor can be a source of negative attitudes toward hotel management (Hughes, & Bozionelos, 2007). Regular monitoring and control of work-life balance ensure positive attitudes of employees, which are a necessary condition for improving their performance (Talukder *et al.*, 2018). Management of work-related attitudes of employees and identification of factors that influence them leads to greater customer satisfaction (Im & Kim, 2022).

If employees want to maintain a good work-life balance, the best way to do this is not to encourage programs and policies but to encourage different attitudes towards the company, focusing more on social arrangements and less on promotion, hierarchy, and self-sacrificing work (Moore, 2007). Employees who failed to establish a work-life balance will not be sufficiently committed to the organization, which is associated with low effort and low performance of employees (Hughes, & Bozionelos, 2007).



CONCLUSIONS

The results of the research indicate that women perceive work-life balance in hotels better than men. Hotel management shows an understanding of the role of women in work and the family. On the other hand, men in hotels are less satisfied with the established balance between business and family obligations. The results also indicate that work-life balance contributes positively to the work-related attitudes of employees. A positive correlation between these variables has also been confirmed. The hotel industry is characterized by unfavorable working conditions for employees. These conditions can be improved by establishing a balance between life and work, which will also change the attitude of employees towards working conditions in the hotel. By developing the work-life balance variable, hotel management significantly contributes to employee motivation and satisfaction, which positively reflects the hotel's attractiveness in the labor market. It should be noted that the research was conducted during the pandemic crisis and that this could have influenced the results obtained in this way.

Practical implications. The results of the research contribute to the existing literature by expanding the understanding of the importance of work-life balance for managers and hotel employees in the field of human resource management. Hotel managers must take appropriate measures in their business plans to include the time, resources, and activities that they will set aside for the family obligations of employees. Further, the managers can conduct an annual survey of employees to evaluate the activities of the management in the matter of establishing a balance between life and work and possibly give certain suggestions on how to improve these activities. In the survey process, managers must pay special attention to men and their attitudes regarding work-life balance, considering that men rated this business factor more poorly. By respecting family obligations, the management shows that it cares about its employees, which contributes to the commitment of the employees and their positive attitude towards the hotel. Such a positive attitude of employees spreads among potential guests of the hotel, competitors, potential employees, and business associates of the hotel. All this creates a positive image of the hotel, not only in the labor market, but also in the goods market, but also affects the experience of the hotel service among guests.

Research limitations. The first limitation refers to the comprehensiveness (width) of observation of the dependent and independent variables. It is assumed that the observation of variables through certain sub-variables would give more detailed results on aspects of work-life balance. Also, the dependent variable work-related attitudes of employees can be observed through certain sub-variables (e.g., job satisfaction and organizational commitment, see Jain *et al.*, 2021). Another limitation is related to the sample size. Although the response rate is satisfactory (33%), when collecting data, it was observed that employees were not interested in participating in the survey. The third limitation concerns the structure of the sample. Based on the data shown in Table 1, it can be concluded that the participation of employees in 5-star hotels is low. These hotels are perceived as significant drivers of the hotel business, in terms of defined business culture and excellent organizational structure, so their greater participation would provide more valuable information for research and conclusions.

Future research could be based on the inclusion of a larger number of work-life balance sub-variables and the analysis of their impact on various aspects of employees' work. Researchers could try to quantify the value of work-life balance so that they could track the progress of this variable over time. Further, future research can be based on a comparison of the development of the work-life balance variable between hotels of different categories.



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BALANS IZMEĐU ŽIVOTA I POSLA I STAVOVI ZAPOSLENIH PREMA POSLU: STUDIJA SLUČAJA U HOTELSKOJ INDUSTRIJI SRBIJE

Rezime:

Hotelska industrija prepoznata je na tržištu rada kao nedovoljno atraktivna za potencijalne zaposlene. Iz tih razloga, menadžment hotela mora posebnu pažnju posvetiti obezbeđivanju ravnoteže između poslovnih i porodičnih obaveza zaposlenih, kako bi stvorili povoljnije uslove rada. Uvažavanjem porodičnih obaveza zaposlenih može se uticati na pozitivan stav zaposlenih prema poslu. Cilj rada je istražiti prirodu veze između balansa između života i posla i stavova zaposlenih prema poslu. Istraživanje je sprovedeno na uzorku od 90 zaposlenih u hotelima Srbije sa tri, četiri i pet zvezdica. Testiranje postavljenih istraživačkih hipoteza sprovedeno je primenom neparametarskog testa za poređenje grupa, korelacione analize i regresione analize. Primenom neparametarskog testa za poređenje grupa, utvrđena je razlika u nivou doživljaja balansa između života i posla među muškim i ženskim ispitanicima. Zabeleženo je i to da su muškarci lošije ocenili work-life balance u odnosu na žene. Rezultati ukazuju na jaku, pozitivnu i statistički značajnu korelaciju između balansa između života i posla i stavova zaposlenih. Balans između života i posla pozitivno doprinosi stavovima zaposlenih prema poslu.

Ključne reči:

Balans između života i posla,
Stavovi zaposlenih,
Upravljanje ljudskim resursima,
Hotel.