The Impact of Work-Life Balance on Employee Performance: Evidence from Budget Hotels in Belihuloya, Sri Lanka

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Abstract- **The hospitality industry's labor-intensive nature and the pivotal role of operational staff in service delivery highlight the importance of understanding factors that influence employee performance. This study explores how work-life balance (WLB), including job content, personal attributes, and family-related factors, impacts performance among low-level employees in budget hotels in Belihuloya, Sri Lanka. A quantitative approach was employed with data collected from 210 employees using structured questionnaires. The findings reveal a strong positive relationship between job content, personal factors, and employee performance, while family factors show a modest effect. These insights are significant for developing targeted human resource strategies in resource-constrained hospitality settings. The study contributes to the under-researched context of WLB in Sri Lankan budget hotels and proposes practical recommendations for enhancing staff well-being and performance.**

Keywords— ***Budget Hotel Industry, Belihuloya, Work-life Balance, Employee Performance***

I. INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry stands as a vital component of the global economy, accounting for over one-third of the service sector and offering substantial employment opportunities worldwide [1]. Its labor-intensive nature, characterized by direct customer interaction, places significant emphasis on the performance of operational staff, particularly in front-line roles [2]. In such environments, employee performance is not only a key determinant of customer satisfaction but also a critical factor in sustaining competitive advantage in a highly dynamic industry [3].

One of the persistent challenges faced by hospitality employees is maintaining an effective balance between work responsibilities and personal life. This issue is especially pronounced in hotel settings, where long working hours, shift-based schedules, weekend duties, and high emotional demands are the norm [4]. While the sector may offer professional development opportunities, it often does so at the cost of personal time, rest, and well-being. Consequently, work-life balance (WLB) has emerged as a vital topic of inquiry, with increasing interest in its impact on employee behavior, retention, satisfaction, and performance.

WLB is not about achieving a perfect equilibrium but about enabling employees to fulfill both work and non-work roles in a sustainable manner [9]. In the hotel industry, however, achieving such a balance is difficult due to structural constraints like inadequate compensation, rigid schedules, minimal flexibility, and limited support for personal needs [4]. Studies suggest that when employees perceive a lack of balance, it often results in stress, absenteeism, low morale, and underperformance [10].

In the Sri Lankan context, these challenges are intensified in rural regions such as Belihuloya, a growing tourist destination known for its scenic landscape and ecological significance. Budget hotels in this area play a vital role in accommodating increasing tourist flows but struggle with high employee turnover, limited access to skilled labor, and constrained human resource practices. Employees often reside away from their families, with limited access to transport, communication, or recreational services, which exacerbates work-life conflicts. Compared to luxury hotels in urban centers, these establishments operate under resource limitations that make WLB support mechanisms less feasible or effective.

Despite global research addressing WLB in hospitality, studies focusing specifically on budget hotels in underdeveloped areas like Belihuloya remain scarce. This creates a clear research gap regarding how WLB factors such as job content, personal attributes, and family responsibilities influence employee performance in these unique conditions. Filling this gap is critical for improving human resource practices, employee well-being, and service quality in budget hotel operations.

Accordingly, the present study investigates the relationship between WLB and employee performance in Belihuloya's budget hotel sector. The study focuses on three primary WLB dimensions job content, personal factors, and family-related factors, and their individual and collective effects on employee performance. The following research questions guide the study:

1. What is the level of work-life balance factors that exist in Belihuloya budget hotels?

2. What is the impact of job content on the performance of employees?

3. What is the impact of personal or psychological factors on employee performance?

4. What is the impact of family-related factors on employee performance?

5. Which WLB dimension has the most significant influence on employee performance in the Belihuloya hotel sector?

By answering these questions, the study aims to provide evidence-based recommendations to improve working conditions in budget hotels and contribute to the academic discourse on WLB in hospitality settings in emerging economies.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Employee Performance (EP)

An important component of organizational success is employee performance [6]. As a dependent variable impacted by a number of variables, it has been extensively researched [7]. Performance entails using knowledge to accomplish tasks in an efficient manner in addition to possessing it [6]. It encompasses actions and results that are in line with company objectives and are influenced by elements such as dedication, drive, and human resources procedures[7]. Performance encompasses declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, and motivation and is about behavior rather than just outcomes [8] .

B. Work-Life Balance (WLB)

Effective time management between professional and family obligations is known as work-life balance (WLB) [9]. Economic uncertainty, organizational reorganizations, and growing workplace demands which frequently necessitate employees to work longer hours under stressful conditions have all contributed to the growing significance of WLB over the past three decades [10]. Employee psychological well-being, job satisfaction, family life, and health can all be adversely affected by poor work-life balance [11]. Job content, working hours, flexibility, family obligations, and organizational support are important factors [12].

Key dimensions of WLB include:

1) Job Content:

The nature and requirements of an employee's work, such as workload, job complexity, autonomy, and role expectations, are referred to as job content. Poor work-life balance is often caused by stress and dissatisfaction resulting from a mismatch between expected and actual job roles. Employees are better able to divide their time and energy between work and personal life when they have clear roles and manageable workloads [9] .

2) Personal Factors:

Personal factors include a person's disposition, social surroundings, lifestyle, and level of mental and emotional fortitude. A healthy work-life balance is more likely to be maintained by employees who have positive attitudes, effective coping strategies, and supportive social environments. Performance, satisfaction, and plans to remain in an organization are significantly influenced by elements like motivation, stress levels, burnout, and personal health [13]

3) Family Factors:

How well employees manage work and life is directly impacted by family obligations, including childcare, elder care, and housework. Work-family conflict arises from an inability to balance these obligations, and it can lead to emotional exhaustion, absenteeism, and decreased productivity. These issues can be reduced and a better WLB can be encouraged by supportive family environments and organizational policies, such as parental leave, flexible scheduling, and on-site childcare [9].

C. The Relationship between WLB & Employee Performance

Several empirical studies have shown that the experience of employee work-life balance has a positive relationship with employees' performance and organizational performance as well [14]. Work-life balance has been shown to have positive results, such as low turnover intention, improved performance, and job satisfaction [15].Work-life balance contributes to increasing employees' in-role performance and satisfaction. The experience of psychological well-being and harmony in life helps employees focus on their work, resulting in higher performance[16]. This study measures work-life balance through three dimensions: job content, personal factors, and family factors.

D. The Relationship between Job Contents & Employee Performance

The nature of a job and the type of work involved have a significant impact on employees, influencing their motivation to perform effectively and efficiently. A study has found that engaging in job content can lead to greater job satisfaction and a willingness to continue working with the organization for an extended period [2] . Another study has revealed that job design characteristics have a positive impact on employees' attitudes, behavior, and job performance [2]. Additionally, Faragher et al, as cited in [2], identified a significant positive influence of both workplace and job characteristics on job performance and overall job satisfaction.

A significant positive relationship between job content and employee performance has been identified. [2] They further revealed that constructive job content encourages employees to be satisfied and consider continuing with the organization for a longer time. Based on the literature, the following hypothesis can be considered:

H1: There is a positive relationship between the nature of the job content and the employee performance of hotel employees in Belihuloya budget hotels.

E. The Relationship between Personal Factors and Employee Performance

Employees' affective commitment is an attitudinal response that occurs based on their experiences and beliefs about the work environment. Positive work-life balanced experiences and beliefs should enhance employees' commitment to the organization, which in turn may lead to better job performance in their assigned [16]. Furthermore, experiencing psychological well-being and life harmony can positively impact an employee's focus on their work, resulting in improved job performance [11].

Employees feeling physically and mentally comfortable have a significant positive impact on organizational success and employee performance[17]. Previous studies have also highlighted the importance of work-life balance in improving employees' psychological well-being and how this well-being influences employee performance positively [18][19]. Therefore, based on the literature, the following hypothesis has been developed:

H2: There is a positive relationship between the nature of the personal factors and employee performance of hotel employees in Belihuloya budget hotels.

F. The Relationship between Family Factors and Employee Performance

Several empirical studies have shown that family factors are positively related to employees' performance and organizational performance. [16] Specifically, family factors have been shown to have positive outcomes such as time allocation, mutual understanding, family support of performance, and job satisfaction [16]). Work-family conflict can have a negative impact on both role performance and extra-role performance. Therefore, work-life balance and family factors have a positive effect on employees' affective commitment to their organization's performance Casper et al., as cited in [16]

The general managers as critical in shaping the family-friendly organizational climate in a given hotel. In supportive hotels, people are encouraged to talk about their families and foster positive relationships[20] .Employees are believed to perform better when they know their families are happy and well taken care of. Employer family-friendly policies are viewed as contributing to personal control and are thought to have positive outcomes for employees [16]. Based on literature, the following hypothesis can be considered.

H3: There is a positive relationship between the nature of the family factors and employee performance of hotel employees in Belihuloya budget hotels.

G. Theories for the study

1) Work-Family Border Theory

Work-Family Border Theory, people must actively manage the boundaries between work and family in order to maintain a healthy balance. [21] These boundaries can be psychological (different emotional and mental engagement in each area), temporal (specific times allotted for each domain), or physical (different locations for work and home). These boundaries' permeability the degree to which elements from one area can encroach into the other and flexibility the capacity to modify them to suit the requirements of either domain determine how effective they are. For example, taking work calls during family time shows high permeability, while flexible work schedules that permit attending family events show high flexibility. Effective border management promotes increased productivity, contentment, and well-being in both work and family life. On the other hand, poorly maintained, extremely permeable boundaries can lead to stress and imbalance, underscoring the significance of active boundary regulation for a higher standard of living.

2) Social Exchange Theory

Blau (1968) asserts that the foundation of social exchange theory is the idea that social behavior arises from an exchange process in which people seek to maximize advantages and minimize disadvantages. This theory is applied in the context of work-life balance to comprehend the mutually beneficial relationship between employers and employees. Employees are more likely to be loyal, satisfied with their jobs, and perform better when their employers offer them useful resources like flexible work schedules, encouraging policies, and a positive work atmosphere [22]. Employees who feel appreciated and treated fairly are more likely to maintain a healthy work-life balance, according to the theory, which highlights the significance of fairness and reciprocal obligation in these interactions. On the other hand, if the interaction is seen as unjust or biased, it could cause discontent and a clash between the roles of the family and the workplace. This idea also holds true for interpersonal relationships, where reciprocal offers of care and support enhance general wellbeing and facilitate a more seamless blending of personal and professional obligations.

3) The Spillover Theory

The Spillover Theory was initially established by Graham L. Staines. One's work or familial experiences could overflow into other aspects of life or vice versa, depending on the basic idea. Positive spillover happens when satisfaction, skills, or advantages gained in one area improve other areas.[23] For example, problem-solving skills developed while working can increase family interactions, and emotional support from family can increase job [23]. This positive relationship promotes a mutually beneficial outcome when improvements in one area have led to positive effects in another.

Negative spillovers occur when anxiety, demands, or adverse incidents from one area negatively impact the other. For example, long working hours and job stress can lead to family conflicts, less quality time with family members, and feelings of discontent in personal life[24]. This negative relationship can reduce well-being as well as productivity in both areas. The Spillover Theory shows the interconnection of both personal and professional life, stressing the importance of managing demands while fostering good

experiences in both areas to maintain general well-being. Organizations that recognize and handle the causes of negative spillovers by giving helpful policies and resources can help workers achieve a better work-life balance[24].

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Approaches to Theories

The deductive approach was chosen by the researcher because it is most appropriate for analyzing correlations between variables through quantitative methods. This choice was made after a review of earlier research on work-life balance and an analysis of positivist and constructivist philosophies [25]

B. Research Purpose

The purpose of this quantitative study is to explore the relationship between employee performance and work-life balance (WLB) in the budget hotel in Belihuloya. It examines how working conditions impact productivity, customer service, stress, physical and mental health, and job satisfaction, all of which are based on the Job Demands-Resources model. It is looking to provide information that can be used to build policies that will enhance WLB and employee satisfaction in the hospitality industry.

C. Research Design

This study's research design provides a systematic approach to examining the connection between low-level employees' performance and work-life balance (WLB) in Belihuloya budget hotels. For the purpose of collecting and analyzing measurable data about WLB variables (job content, personal factors, family factors) and performance indicators (productivity, punctuality, work behaviors, etc.), a quantitative research approach was chosen. By using this method, the researcher may examine specific hypotheses based on accepted theories while maintaining objectivity.

The most effective method to collect data from an extensive population that could not be fully examined was to use a survey method. Through surveys, low-level employees from 20 strategically selected budget hotels can provide standardized responses, which can be used to test theoretical assumptions about how WLB affects performance in the hospitality sector and to determine the current state of matters.

The study uses a cross-sectional time frame, meaning that information was gathered in a single sitting. The design provides sufficient information to ascertain the present state of WLB and employee performance in the hospitality sector of Belihuloya and allows generalization of findings to the aimed population.

D. Conceptual Framework

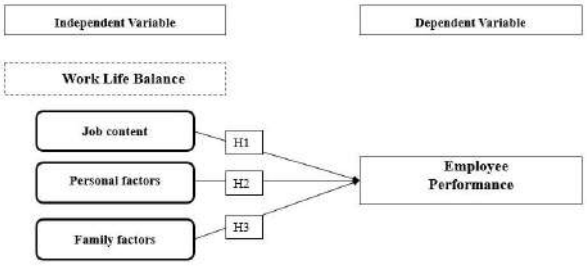


Fig.1. Conceptual Framework [Source: Developed by researcher based on literature]

This study examines the effects of work-life balance (WLB) on employee performance among low-level staff members employed by budget hotels in Belihuloya, a well-liked but resource-constrained tourist destination in Sri Lanka. The study focuses on employees who frequently deal with demanding work schedules, minimal autonomy, and poor assistance networks, making WLB a crucial component of their job performance.

Work-Life Balance (WLB) is an independent variable. Three context-specific dimensions are used to operate WLB:

1) Job Content

Low-level employees in Belihuloya's hospitality industry frequently put in long hours for low wages and inadequate support. Cleanliness and safety of the work environment, multitasking and guest demands, compensation and scheduling procedures, and organizational support systems like equitable supervision and HR policies are all included in this dimension.

2) Personal Factors

These speak to individual differences in how employees cope with work-related stress in a rural, tourist-driven environment. Personality traits (such as motivation and adaptability), emotional resilience and mental well-being and personal expectations influenced by a lack of opportunities for career advancement are important components.

3) Family Factors

The majority of lower- hotel employees in this area are also responsible for major household duties. Time allocated for family responsibilities, family members' understanding and support, and emotional exhaustion from balancing work and caregiving are all evaluated in this dimension.

These three WLB components lead to three hypotheses:

H1: Employee performance is significantly affected by job content.

H2: Employee performance is significantly affected by personal factors.

H3: Employee performance is significantly affected by family factors.

4) Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

Employee performance is determined by how well they complete tasks like cleaning rooms and operating the front desk, being productive (output in food and beverage or housekeeping roles), attendance, punctuality, and conduct at work, Participation in training and achievement of personal development.

This framework supports a realistic and evidence-based understanding of how improving WLB can lead to better employee performance, which in turn enhances guest satisfaction and hotel operations, by concentrating on real-life challenges in Belihuloya's budget hotel sector.

E. Population and the sample

Low-level employees in a variety of departments (such as front desk, housekeeping, kitchen, food, and beverage) at budget hotels in Belihuloya, Sri Lanka, make up the study's target population. The researcher chose the top 20 budget hotels on Booking.com based on popularity because it was hard to pinpoint the precise number of such employees in that area. The study population consisted of the 442 low-level employees that these hotels collectively employ. The researcher measured a sample size of 210 employees using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin to determine the appropriate sample size. The respondents were chosen from each hotel based on their percentage of total employees using the proportionate random sampling technique. This strategy maintains data collection accuracy and feasibility while guaranteeing balanced representation across all chosen hotels.

F. Method of Data Collection

Low-level employees of budget hotels in Belihuloya were given a structured, self-administered questionnaire to complete in order to gather the study's primary data. The 40-question survey was designed to assess employee performance and work-life balance. It had both closed-ended and open-ended questions and was created using a validated scale. The questionnaire was supported by a cover letter and organized into five main sections: demographic details, job content, personal factors, family factors, and employee performance.

G. Data Analysis Method

Data was analyzed using SPSS 21.0 through three main techniques; Univariate Analysis: Described individual variables using statistics like mean and standard deviation, Bivariate Analysis: Used Pearson's correlation to examine relationships between work-life balance problems and employee performance, Multivariate Analysis: Applied multiple regression to assess the combined effect of WLB dimensions on performance. These methods provided both descriptive insights and tested the study's hypotheses.

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS

This study explored how Work-Life Balance (WLB) influences low-level employees' performance in budget hotels located in Belihuloya, Sri Lanka. Of the 210 distributed surveys, 207 were completed, resulting in a high response rate of 98.57%. The demographic data showed that 64.3% of the respondents were male, the majority were aged between 21 and 30 years (55%), and most were married. In terms of education, 45.4% held diplomas, and a similar percentage had between one and three years of service. Most respondents worked in the front office (27.5%) and earned between 30,000 and 40,000 LKR monthly. Notably, 51.7% had fewer than four leave days per month and lacked alternative sources of income, indicating limited personal time and potential stressors contributing to work-life imbalance.

Descriptive statistics revealed that all three WLB dimensions had high average scores: job content ($M = 4.4388$), personal factors ($M = 4.4281$), family factors ($M = 4.3849$), and employee performance ($M = 4.4262$). This indicates that employees generally held a favorable perception of both their work-life balance and job performance.

Reliability analysis confirmed strong internal consistency for all constructs (Cronbach's alpha > 0.76). Correlation and regression analyses were performed to examine the relationships between WLB dimensions and employee performance.

H1: Job content and employee performance

Regression analysis indicated a strong, statistically significant positive relationship between job content and employee performance ($\beta = 0.524$, $p < 0.001$), supported by a Pearson correlation of $r = 0.920$. These results underscore that favorable job content including manageable workloads, supportive supervision, equitable pay, and clear responsibilities significantly enhances employee performance. These findings are consistent with Rubel and Kee [2], who found that job content is a key driver of job satisfaction and retention. The findings also align with Faragher et al., as cited in [2], who emphasized the positive role of job characteristics in employee outcomes. This supports the study's second objective.

H2: Personal factors and employee performance

The regression analysis for personal factors also showed a strong positive effect on performance ($\beta = 0.459$, $p < 0.001$), and Pearson correlation yielded $r = 0.912$. These results suggest that employees' mental resilience, motivation, health, and coping mechanisms substantially influence their job performance. These findings align with prior research by Greenhaus and Beutell [24] and Helmle et al. [17], who stressed the role of psychological well-being in enhancing workplace output. The results reinforce the importance of recognizing personal and emotional dimensions in human resource practices.

H3: Family factors and employee performance

Although family factors exhibited a positive effect on employee performance, the relationship was weaker ($\beta = 0.048$, $p = 0.024$; $r = 0.233$). These findings suggest that while family obligations and support mechanisms impact performance, their influence is less pronounced compared to job content and personal factors. This

confirms prior research [16] which highlights that while supportive family environments can mitigate work-family conflict, their standalone effect on performance is limited. The result addresses the fourth objective of the study.

The overall multiple regression model explained 91.2% of the variance in employee performance ($R^2 = 0.912$), confirming a high predictive value. Among the three dimensions of WLB, job content explained the largest share of variance ($R^2 = 0.846$), followed by personal factors ($R^2 = 0.831$), and family factors ($R^2 = 0.054$). These outcomes validate the fifth objective: determining the most influential WLB dimension on employee performance in Belihuloya's budget hotel sector.

These findings suggest that employees generally have a positive perception of their job performance and work-life balance. All constructs had strong internal consistency, according to reliability testing (Cronbach's alpha > 0.76).

Three hypotheses were tested using regression and correlation analysis. The following were the results:

H1: Employee performance and job content Regression analysis ($\beta = 0.524$, $p < 0.001$) and Pearson correlation ($r = 0.920$) revealed a strong, significant positive relationship, confirming that enhanced job content (such as environment, pay, support, and manageable workloads) leads to significantly better performance. This bolsters the study's second specific goal.

H2: Personal factors and performance of employees

Performance is strongly influenced by psychological stability, personality traits, and personal attitudes, as evidenced by the strong positive correlation between regression results ($\beta = 0.459$, $p < 0.001$) and Pearson correlation ($r = 0.912$). This achieved the third specific goal.

H3: Employee performance and family factors

A modest but positive effect of family factors was indicated by the lower regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.048$, $p = 0.024$), despite the significant Pearson correlation ($r = 0.233$, $p < 0.01$). This supports the fourth specific objective. The high predictive power of the multiple regression model was confirmed by the fact that it explained 91.2% (R2 = 0.912) of the variance in employee performance. When the three WLB factors were compared, it was found that job content had the greatest impact (R2 = 0.846), personal factors came in second (R2 = 0.831), and family factors had the least impact (R2 = 0.054). Family factors, while important, have a lesser impact on employee performance than job content and personal factors. This conclusion satisfies the study's fifth and last specific goal.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis [Source: Survey data collected by the researcher]

		Job content	Personal factors	Family factors	Employee performance
Job content	Pearson Correlation	1	.843**	.166**	.920**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.000	.008	.000
	N	207	207	207	207
Personal factors	Pearson Correlation	.843**	1	.211**	.912**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000		.001	.000
	N	207	207	207	207
Family factors	Pearson Correlation	.166**	.211**	1	.233**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.008	.001		.000
	N	207	207	207	207
Employee performance	Pearson Correlation	**.920****	**.912****	**.233****	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	207	207	207	207

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Overall, the findings emphasize that enhancing job design and addressing personal well-being should be strategic priorities in improving workforce productivity in resource-limited hotel environments. While family support has a role, targeted interventions in the work domain yield stronger results.

V. CONCLUSION

This study has established that Work-Life Balance (WLB) significantly impacts the performance of low-level employees in Belihuloya's budget hotel sector. Drawing from a comprehensive analysis of survey data, the findings revealed strong, positive relationships between job content and employee performance, followed by personal factors, with family factors showing a more modest influence. All three hypotheses (H1, H2, and H3) were statistically supported, confirming the central argument that improved WLB enhances employee outcomes.

Specifically, job content emerged as the most influential factor. Employees who experienced manageable workloads, fair pay, supportive supervision, and flexible scheduling were found to perform better across key indicators such as productivity, punctuality, and quality of work. Personal factors, including emotional stability, motivation, and adaptability, also had a substantial effect, indicating the importance of mental and emotional well-being in performance outcomes. Family-related factors had a weaker but still statistically significant impact, underlining the need for basic support structures even in resource-constrained hotel environments.

These insights have practical implications for human resource management in the hospitality industry. Managers are encouraged to implement supportive job designs, fair compensation packages, and targeted psychological well-being programs. While full-scale family-supportive policies may be challenging in budget settings, even minor initiatives like flexible leave or open communication about personal

obligations can positively affect staff morale and retention.

The study also contributes to the theoretical discourse on WLB by validating the relevance of Work-Family Border Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and Spillover Theory within the context of Sri Lankan budget hotels. These theories provide a solid foundation for understanding the dynamic and interdependent nature of work and non-work domains, especially in under-researched and rural hospitality settings.

Future research should consider integrating mediating or moderating variables such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, or burnout to better understand the mechanisms behind WLB's impact on performance. Additionally, exploring other WLB dimensions like job security, health benefits, wellness initiatives, or digital connectivity could offer more holistic insights. Comparative studies between rural and urban hospitality settings would also deepen our understanding of context-specific challenges and best practices.

Ultimately, this study underscores the importance of employee-centered strategies in enhancing service quality and operational efficiency in the tourism and hospitality sectors of emerging economies.

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