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**An Investigation into the Work-Life Balance
that Exists for Workers in the Irish Hospitality
Industry**

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MA in Human Resource Management

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Submitted to the National College of Ireland, August 2016

ABSTRACT

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Work-Life balance is fast becoming a topic that human resource management place great importance in. The number of studies into work-life balance has increased over the years as organisations are witnessing the benefits of work-life balance policies in companies such as Google and Facebook. These companies have been credited with implementing these work-life balance policies and rightly so but it has left a gap in the research as to other industries. To date there has been very little research into work-life balance in the Irish hospitality industry. The industry has a very bad reputation in terms of hours, pay and stress however due to the small amount of research it is difficult to prove this in terms of the Irish hospitality industry.

A Qualitative research method was used in the form of interviews. These took place on a sample of workers from the hospitality industry. The sample contained a number of different departments, ages and genders. The interviews were built around the literature examined and the research objectives identified. The data gathered was analysed and discussed in the same manner, by research objective. This allowed the project to keep its focus.

The results were clear that in this sample there was a negative work-life balance for the workers in the hospitality industry. There were other interesting and vital conclusions such as work-life balance motivators change with age and most importantly work-life balance differs from department to department. Further research is recommending into the different departments in hospitality to gain a clearer view of work-life balance for the workers in specific departments.

DECLARATION

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation has, by far, been the most challenging activity I have ever undertaken and would never have been completed without the help and support of a number of people who I would like to take this opportunity to thank.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor Rebecca McGuire for her guidance, support and patience. I would like to thank all the participants of this investigation whom without this literally would not exist. I thank you for your time which as I know is deeply valuable.

I would like to acknowledge my friends who have listened to me complain constantly and helped me in stressful times during the completion of this dissertation. I know it wasn't easy. I would like to pay a deep thank you to my lecturers and especially my classmates who made this year so enjoyable and a truly unforgettable experience.

I would like to thank my brothers, John and Ciarán, who have assisted me greatly in the completion of this dissertation and should know that I am always thankful for their help and support. Finally, I would like to thank my parents, Pat and Helena, for their continuing support, guidance and love without which I would have never had the opportunity to attend higher level education. I am deeply grateful for all of the opportunities I have had in my life because of them.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Irish people have always been famed worldwide for our warm personality and welcoming culture so it does not come as a shock that we are well known for our hospitality. The sector has experienced highs and lows over the past twenty years with the rise of the ‘Celtic Tiger’ and the economic crisis that hit in 2008. Since this crash the hospitality sector like all others has been rebuilding to its current position in the Irish economy. The sector is now in a position where it is profitable and contributing to the strong recovery of the Irish economy. Central to this rebuilding project were the workers in the sector.

It is no secret that human capital is now a valuable resource for any organisation that can be utilised to gain an advantage in the market. Isac & Rusu (2016) conclude that Human Resource Management is about attracting, hiring, training, motivating and maintaining this human capital. This is further acknowledged by Miller et al, (2015) who claim that through training and appropriate human resource policies that the value human resource capital can be enhanced. This is where work-life balance comes into play. This dissertation will investigate the work-life balance that exists for workers in the Irish hospitality industry. This investigation aims to get an honest view of what work-life balance is like for workers in the hospitality industry.

This chapter sets the process that this dissertation will follow. The following chapters are broken down into a brief explanation as to the purpose of study.

1.1. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review contains a synopsis of literature relevant to work-life balance and the hospitality industry. The literature contains sources from journal articles, industry reports, books, newspaper articles and online databases in order to gain a clear understanding of work-life balance and the hospitality industry.

1.2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This brief chapter lays out the research objectives that have been finalised after an in depth view at the relevant literature. The purpose of these objectives is to build an

understanding of the different aspects of the main research question. This will allow for an informed conclusion to the research.

1.3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology chapter contains information as to how the research was carried out. This includes the research theory in terms philosophy, approach and strategy. This theory was then applied to this research project in terms of data collection and analysis.

1.4. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter provides detailed results of the data collection. This information will be presented in such a way as to satisfy the research objectives.

1.5. DISCUSSION

This chapter involve analysis of the key themes and traits that are found in the results of the data collection method. These themes and traits will then be analysed against the literature studied in the literature review. This chapter is vital to the conclusions that are made from this dissertation.

1.6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusion chapter ties together all the information gathered throughout the dissertation and lay out the facts and themes of this study again. The chapter will finish with a brief section on further research opportunities, recommendations and a personal learning statement.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The following chapter aims to outline the theory behind this piece of research. It is in essence a review of the literature surrounding this area at the present moment in time.

2.1. WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Although widely acknowledged as a growing and important element of human resource management work-life balance is a term that has been interpreted in many different ways. With so many different perspectives and definitions on work-life balance it is my intention to explore the different conclusions and perceptions of multiple authors on the subject so as to compare these understandings with that of the sample later in this investigation.

2.1.1. *WORK-LIFE BALANCE DEFINITION AND THEORIES*

Work-life balance has many different definitions by different authors depending on the context one is speaking. Kalliath & Brough (2008) concluded that there is not one clear definition of work-life balance but an array of different definitions depending on the author's viewpoint. The Oxford Dictionary (2016) define work-life balance as "the division of one's time and focus between working and family or leisure activities". Lockwood (2003) states that work-life balance was first "coined in 1986" but there were work-life balance programs in place by the early 1930's in parts of the US. According to Lockwood (2003) W.K. Kellogg Company introduced four six hour shifts in their production in place of the standard three eight hour shifts. The result of this change was an increase in production level and employee satisfaction. According to Lockwood (2003) it was Rosabeth Moss Kanter's (1977) book "Work and Family in the United States: A Critical Review and Agenda for Research and Policy that brought the topic of work-life balance to the forefront of research and organisations. From her research Lockwood (2003) determines that it was from this point that companies started to introduce work-life programs for their employees. This started for mainly pregnant women in the early stages but has now evolved to incorporate all employees and recognise all forms of family involvement. This is evident in the modern era as Kalliath & Brough (2008)

conclude that the term work-life balance evolved from work-family balance in order to include all employees regardless of having children or not.

What are the differing academic definitions that have been concluded over the years? Greenhaus et al (2003) state that work-life balance is “the extent to which an individual is engaged in and equally satisfied with his or her work role and family role consisting of three components of work family balance: time balance (equal time devoted to work and family), involvement balance (equal involvement in work and family) and satisfaction balance (equal satisfaction with work and family)”. Kalliath & Brough (2008) went on to propose that work-life balance could be easier defined across multiple conceptualisations. These conceptualisations being:

- Multiple Roles
- Equity Across Multiple Roles
- Satisfaction Between Multiple Roles
- Fulfilment of Role Salience Between Multiple Roles
- A Relationship between Conflict and Facilitation
- Perceived Control Between Multiple Roles

Through their use of conceptualisations Kalliath & Brough (2008) proposed a new definition for work-life balance. Kalliath & Brough (2008) proposed that work-life balance is a “perception of an individual that work and non-work activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual’s current life priorities”. Fleetwood (2007) in contrast to this makes a more simplified and narrow definition of “work-life balance is about people having a measure of control over when, where and how they work”. Maiya & Bagali (2014) state that “work-life balance is not merely related to work and life; it is a positive state of mind”. As you can see there are many different definitions and perceptions as to what work-life balance is and how it should be viewed. Kalliath & Brough (2008) conclude that it is difficult to develop one clear definition for work-life balance but that there is a clear necessity in order to validate theoretical models.

As far as theoretical models go in work-life balance there are four main theories:

1. Social Exchange

According to Blau (2009) social exchange is what is exchanged by employees and employers when work-life balance is implemented. Blau

(2009) concludes the exchange is basically the employees receiving work-life balance policies such as flexitime and the employers receiving a highly committed and productive employee in return.

2. Scarcity and Expansion

Marks (1977) concluded that scarcity and expansion is about the management of energy levels and what provides and saps energy. Scarcity according to Marks (1977) is the view that energy is a resource that a company can harness. Expansion is the belief that family activities and a good lifestyle can in fact provide and expand energy levels (Marks, 1977).

3. Spillover and Crossover

Spillover and crossover are in essence the same theory. The theory states that stress that is caused in the workplace will in turn cause stress in an employee's home and personal life and vice versa (Westman, 2001).

4. Psychological Contract

Rousseau (1995) stated that a psychological contract is an "individual's beliefs, shaped by the organization, regarding the terms of an exchange agreement between individuals and their organization". In terms of work-life balance it focuses on the relationship between employee and employer and how they can find equilibrium in terms of work-life balance policies.

Evidence of these theories can be found throughout this literature review and also the entire piece of research.

2.1.2. RELEVANCE OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE

What is the importance of work-life balance? Kofodimos (1993) concluded that work and life or family are the two most dominant factors in the life of any employed person. Kozjek et al (2014) argue that work-life balance is an issue that all stakeholders need to take notice of and to manage appropriately. This is evident based on the report by Brich & Paul (2003) who found that organisations that implement appropriate and successful work-life balance practices tend to achieve better production results and higher profits. Achieving work-life balance for your

employees can be difficult and often frustrating for employers but according to Agarwala (2009) an organisation that focuses on the work-life balance of their employees will in turn possess employees who are highly committed to their job. Reduced staff turnover, reduced absenteeism, reduced lateness, improved productivity, enhanced reputation, high levels of loyalty and commitment and increased retention rates are all positives of work-life balance programmes identified by Lazar et al (2010). Gorenak & Popovic (2014) conclude that with all of these positive outcomes it would be negligible of an organisation not to attempt to improve the work-life balance of their employees. Lockwood (2003) also maintains that the positives of work-life balance are too good to ignore and states that “work/life programs have the potential to significantly improve employee morale, reduce absenteeism, and retain organizational knowledge”.

Work-life balance as I have detailed is an important topic being discussed by academics and is starting to be noticed in the business environment. It is important to note that work-life balance is not just a topic for the hospitality industry. There have been numerous studies into different aspects of work life balance across a number of sectors over the last number of years. Karakose et al (2014) conclude in the case of their study of school administrators that if there is a healthy balance between home and work life then the administrator will be a happier and healthier employee. Karakose et al (2014) also conclude that further work needs to be carried out in order to further develop the work-life balance that currently exists in the school administrator profession.

Drew et al (2015) conclude in their study of work-life balance in the legal profession that workers in the legal profession that work more than 40 hours per week claim to have both a negative home life and experience a negative work life. These employees further state that they do not aim to be employed by the same company in the next 5 years. This profession is not unlike the hotel profession where there are long hours and often a stressful workload so certain comparisons can be drawn from the study that prove that an investigation into the work-life balance of workers in the hospitality industry could be noteworthy.

In a study of three different sectors; education, banking and the power sector Odunayo et al. (2014) conclude that work life balances are essential to gaining a

competitive advantage in all sectors through the attraction and retention of the best talent available in the labour market. It is concluded in the study that employee effectiveness is greatly enhanced through an improvement in work-life balance by implementation of a more flexible working pattern. Odunayo et al. (2014) acknowledge that introducing work-life strategies across the three sectors cannot be identical strategies but rather tailor made strategies to each sector. From this study there is clear proof that a positive work-life balance is attainable in different sectors.

What is essential to grasp from these three investigations is that they exist. The existence of these studies proves that there is validity to this research question and that work-life balance can be attainable in all sectors. Another key aspect to take note of here is that the area of work-life balance is important to any organisation in order to gain a competitive advantage in a competitive business environment. Hospitality is an extremely competitive industry and is of vital importance to the economy, which will be discussed later in the literature review, and is therefore worthy of this investigation as with the sectors stated above.

2.1.3. MOTIVATORS OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Although many authors have differing views on what work-life balance is there is a lot of focus on what drives employees into achieving work-life balance. Kaliannan, et al (2016) state that work-life balance is the “dividing line between work-life and personal life where a separation is formed between an individual’s career, business, profession, and every other domain that adds up to the individual’s total life”. Kaliannan, et al. (2016) further conclude that work-life balance is achieving a balance between work-life and all other segments of life. In this regard it is noticeable that Kaliannan, et al. (2016) identify that there are different motivators in different areas of life. In other words, what motivates us in work does not motivate us in our private lives and vice versa. Kaliannan, et al (2016) therefore maintain that work-life balance is about finding the balance between motivators in the work environment and motivators in life.

In a study on work-life balance, conducted in Switzerland, Wepfer, et al. (2015) conclude that work-life balance can be viewed as an indicator of satisfaction of how people are living in accordance to their own values in life. The contrast between this

view and Kaliannan, et al (2016) is that Wepfer, et al (2015) view an individual's values in life drive their attitudes and motivations in their work life. In order to emphasise their point Wepfer et al cite Greenhaus, et al (2003) as they conclude that work-life balance is a result of satisfaction with and effectiveness in different life roles in accordance with one's life values.

Clark (2000) is similar to Wepfer (2015) in that he concludes that satisfaction is an important element of work-life balance. Clark (2000) believes that in order to achieve work-life balance one has to find a balance between satisfaction and conflict both at home and in the workplace. Kirchmeyer (2000) also uses the term satisfaction when he speaks of work-life balance. Kirchmeyer (2000) concludes that work-life balance is an experience of satisfaction in all areas of one's life and that without personal energy, time, commitment and resources this is impossible to attain.

Emond (2016) focuses her attention on the differing views of work-life balance depending on the employee's origin. Emond (2016) states that in the American culture employees are "always on the clock", working "long working hours" and "skipping vacation" and that this is seen as the norm. Emond (2016) concludes that in this culture she found it difficult to achieve what she envisaged as a work-life balance. In contrast to this Emond (2016) provides details of the German working culture where work-life balance has become an issue of national debate with laws protecting employees' work-life balance being introduced. Emond (2016) finds that in Germany the working day is limited to ten hours, paid leave of six weeks and unlimited sick leave. Emond (2016) shows the startling difference in attitudes on work-life balance in different countries. The article provides support to the argument that work-life balance is not being viewed as important in some countries and sectors but that it is becoming of bigger importance to employees.

Ghiselli & Zhao (2016) conclude from their findings that there is a clear difference in perspective of work-life balance depending on age and gender. From the investigation Ghiselli & Zhao (2016) find that female employees have stronger barriers to career progression over males as they have stronger ties to family life. This results in females having a different perception to what work-life balance is in relation to males. Ghiselli & Zhao (2016) also find that older employees tend to have

greater pressure from increased family responsibilities which results in job related stress as they try to progress and provide more for their families. This differs from younger employees who for the vast majority do not have the same family commitments or pressures to deal with. This means that there is a complete different perspective between older and younger employees as to what a positive work-life balance is. These younger generation of workers are often described as generation y workers whom Sommer & Sopp (2006) state as “an enormously optimistic, educated, energetic and compassionate generation. This generation of workers, as concluded by Roberts (2005), wish to carry out work that is meaningful, both to themselves personally and to society as a whole but as committed as they are to work and their careers they value above all their work-life balance and lifestyle. An anonymous author for Career Development International (2003) concludes that generation y is more likely to be committed to their chosen lifestyle rather than their job and that this has driven employers to be more flexible in their retention strategies.

As we can see there is varies different motivators in attaining a positive work-life balance. From the views of the different authors it is clear that many employees view work-life balance as a key to attaining satisfaction in one’s life. This is the major motivator for employees but they do differ on what motivates them depending on home life, origin, age and gender in attaining a positive work-life balance. In this research I hope to attain investigate as to what are the difference in motivators for different age groups, genders, employees from different origins and their home lives.

2.1.4. IMPLEMENTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

It is my intention to investigate what implementations an employee in the Irish hospitality industry would like to see to improve their work-life balance. In order to evaluate their suggestions, it is vital to understand the current literature on the topic. In the following section I will be examining different academic reports and investigations into implementing work-life balance programmes and the negatives and positives that were identified.

Osterman (1995) concluded that work-life balance programmes are institutionalised and procedural as well as formal and informal practices that make it easier for

employees to manage the volatile relationship between the worlds of work and home. Research from the likes of Hobson (2014) and Albertsen et al (2007) has brought different work-life balance possibilities to the attention of organisations such as of innovative working time models, employee participation in decisions on the quantity and location of work, support in the organisation of childcare, support in the provision of care for elderly relatives or relatives in need of care and quality of life. Frame & Hartog (2003) state that work-life balance policies “can encompass childcare provision such as work place nurseries, leave of absence to care for dependants, career breaks, post maternity leave, job sharing opportunities and home working”. Research conducted by Mayberry (2006) led to conclusions that there is the possibility that there are over a hundred different variations of work-life balance policies. However, Dex (2004) maintains that all work-life balance policies fall under five different headings, these being:

1. Flexitime Work Schedules
2. Flexiplace or Telecommuting
3. Job Sharing
4. Part-time Flexiplace
5. Sabbaticals or Career Breaks

Contrary to these conclusions by Dex (2004) Carlson et al (2010), through the use of multiple international studies found that the majority of companies and countries utilised flexitime policies as their main tool in implementing work-life balance. Carlson et al (2010) found in their results that these policies produced the best results in productivity from employees as they were in control of their own work schedule within reason.

Flexitime according to Downes & Koekemoer (2011) flexitime is “an alternative or flexible working schedule” and key to current research on work-life balance. Carlson et al (2010) discovered, through the National Study of Employers in the USA, that there was a significant increase, from the year 1999 to 2009, in the number of employees being offered flexitime by their employers. This discovery gives credit to the Hill et al (2010) conclusion that flexitime is a key strategy used by employers to support employees in today’s economy. Hill et al (2010) go on to conclude that flexitime can improve an employee’s performance both in the workplace and at home, plays a large share in aiding employees in managing work

and family commitments and has a role in reducing work-family conflict. It will be interesting to see from the results of this investigation if employees of the hospitality industry view flexitime as a reasonable work-life balance policy for them.

Kozjek et al (2014) propose that there are challenges to implementing a work-life balance model in an organisation. One of the challenges identified by Kozjek et al (2014) is that employers do not automatically know what an employee perceives to be a positive work-life balance. It is important then for employees to voice their expectations and needs. Kozjek et al (2014) are highlighting the need for effective communication to the work-life balance process and that communication is one of the challenges in implementing a work-life balance policy.

De Cieri et al (2005) identify the company culture as a potential challenge to implementing a work-life balance policy. A company, especially in the hospitality industry, can often reward high commitment and working longer hours to the neglect of other aspects of a person's life (De Cieri, et al., 2005). The culture of a company as highlighted by De Cieri et al (2005) can in many cases be a hostile, isolated and unsupportive environment for employees who have life commitments outside of the workplace. In this kind of culture De Cieri et al (2005) notes that management are often the employees who have been rewarded throughout the years for their commitment to the organisation. This creates a situation where the belief of the managers, especially middle level managers, is that work-life balance programmes are of little worth to the organisation.

There are clear barriers to the implementation of work-life balance policies however the importance of work-life balance to an organisation is growing more and more as the years go by. This is highlighted above by the different values a new working generation has in the workplace. This review of cases and literature only highlights the need for this investigation and creates validity for the subject of work-life balance as a whole.

2.2. HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

As the industry I have chosen to investigate is the Hospitality Industry in Ireland it is pivotal for the investigation that there is a clear understanding of the Irish hospitality

industry, historically and its current position. In order to validate this study, I will also be investigating the importance of the hospitality industry to an economy.

Business 2000 (2000) produced a report for in the Irish times in the year 2000 that stated that in 1925 the Irish Tourist Association promoted just 400 hotels in its very first brochure advertising Ireland as a tourist destination. According to the report this was the very first step in building the tourism and hospitality industries we see in Ireland today. The number of hotels in Ireland in 1925 as already stated was 400; by the year 2007 this number has rose to 857 and in the year 2009 has risen again to 915 or 60,100 rooms available (Sherry Fitzgerald, 2014). A report by the Sherry Fitzgerald (2014) group highlights the fact that by the year 2009 it was not only accommodation that was a major source of revenue for Irish hotels but food and beverage, conferences and function facilities were also profitable. The report by Sherry Fitzgerald (2014) notes that the economic crisis in 2008 was catastrophic for the Irish hotel industry but that in recent years the industry has started to become profitable once again.

According to Harrington & Keating (2006) changes in the international tourism market has resulted in an increasingly demanding market of higher spending tourists seeking the highest standards. Harrington & Keating (2006) conclude that as a result of this hotel customers are seeking higher standards in services, facilities and are expectant of a unique customer experience wherever they go which has placed an enormous amount of pressure on the Irish hospitality industry. If we take a look at the international travellers who would be availing of the Irish hospitality industry figures have risen from 2,549,000 visitors in 2010 to in 4,036,000 2015 (Failte Ireland, 2016). The report by Failte Ireland (2016) highlighted the fact that holiday makers see the friendly and hospitable people as the most important factor when visiting Ireland. This warm and hospitable environment is accountable to an extent to the hospitality industry and the employees who work within the industry.

The hospitality industry is of vital importance to the economy of any country. As we can see from an article by the Association of Accredited Public Policy Advocates to the European Union (2015) the hospitality sector contributes 3.7% to European GDP and accounts for €460 Billion. Ireland of course plays its part in these figures with the hospitality sector providing for 4.5% of Irish GDP in the same period. This

places the Irish hospitality sector as the eight highest contributors to the European economy in terms of the hospitality sector.

The importance of the hospitality sector to both European and national economies does not end there however as in the same article by the Association of Accredited Public Policy Advocates to the European Union (2015) it is noted that across Europe the sector employs 10.2 Million people which is 7.8% of the European workforce which can be described as one in every thirteen jobs in Europe. The importance of the sector is also quite visible in the Irish economy. The sector contributes to 12.7% of employment in the Irish economy. These figures show not only the importance of the hospitality sector to GDP but also to employment for both European and Irish economies.

The importance of the hospitality industry is also highlighted by Chung & Parker (2010) when they stated the hospitality industry “stands as an industry of major economic significance [and] social and environmental impact”. Heskett et al (1994) outlined the importance of employees to this industry when they proposed the Service Profit Chain. In this chain there are dependencies upon different variables within the chain. There are clear links between internal service quality, employee satisfaction and productivity, the value of customer service, customer satisfaction and company profits. The links in the Service Profit Chain highlight the fact that company profits are directly related to employee satisfaction. In today’s modern workplace an element of employee satisfaction comes from their ability to harmonise between their work lives and their life outside of the workplace.

It is quite obvious from this brief analysis the importance of the hospitality sector to the Irish economy in terms of GDP contribution and employment. The hospitality industry also has a vital role to play in the attraction of tourists to the country and the success of the Irish tourism industry. What is noticeable through the Service Profit Chain is that employees are a pivotal piece in the success of the hospitality sector. It is important then that hotel owners and hotel management take the necessary steps to take care of such a vital resource as they would a physical or financial resource.

2.2.1. RESEARCHING WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR

Researching the concept of work-life balance through the many definitions and perceptions is vital for this investigation both in terms of expanding knowledge of the subject and for validation purposes however this investigation is based around the Irish hospitality industry. Therefore, it is vital that we explore current writings, studies and cases as to what kind of work-life balance is expected in the hospitality industry. Do hotel management nourish and foster the employee resource it has at its disposal as they would other vital resources?

According to Connolly & McGing (2006) it is important for managers in the hospitality sector to meet the needs of their customers but also the needs of their workers in order to develop a successful business. This statement makes it difficult to accept the Kelley-Patterson & George (2001) report that graduates in the hospitality, tourism and leisure sectors may find obstacles in developing "positive psychological contracts in that many are likely to work for organisations which require employees to work relatively long hours, at times which make it difficult to find a good balance between home and work life and where pay may be lower than in other sectors". If it is important for an organisation to meet the needs of its employees, then why is it they are struggling to develop positive work-life balances?

So what is the cause of generation y employees being unhappy in the sector? Deery (2002) found that in some areas of Australia and the UK the turnover rate of generation Y workers to be up to 300% per annum. Karatepe & Kilic (2007) believe that this high turnover is due to work-family conflict which comes as a result of poor working conditions, low pay and the pressure of constant customer contact. In this instance Karatepe & Kilic (2007) are basing family conflict on pressures associated with an employees work life within the hospitality industry. In 2005 a study was conducted by Rodriguez & Gregory (2005) of non-hospitality graduates working in the hospitality industry. The reactions and responses of the participants were extremely negative towards the industry. The participants felt that there was no realistic future for them within the industry as the work was more often than not menial in nature and not well paid. The participants according to Rodriguez & Gregory (2005) had very little knowledge as to the career paths in the industry as their employers were not investing in their employees. This shows that management

in the hospitality industry were not providing employees with opportunities to improve their working life and in turn their personal lives. This can be seen in a report by Barron, et al (2007) where the examination was based on hospitality student's experience of working in the hospitality industry and their career expectations. Barron, et al (2007) found that the student's view of the industry had a lot of negative aspects towards work-life balance. The students valued family and leisure time but felt the industry didn't provide them with an appropriate lifestyle to incorporate family and leisure into their timetables. According to the report by Barron, et al (2007), the students only saw a future in the industry if there was a higher recognition of their work-life balance. Barron (2008) states that

“If the industry image is one of menial jobs, poor career opportunities and limited rewards, Generation Y will be even less likely to choose hospitality as a viable, long-term prospect”.

Ghiselli & Zhao (2016) discovered that in September 2014, up to 584,000 employees decided to leave their roles within the hospitality sector in the USA. This left the sector with an employee turnover rate of 4% which coincidentally was the highest rate in all industrial sectors in the USA at the time. Lawson, et al (2013) attribute this high turnover figures to work related stress and the impact that this stress has on family life when not working. Furthermore, O'Neill & Xiao (2010) conclude that hospitality jobs are perceived as stressful and the conflict caused between work and family life is perceived to be a natural aspect of the industry. O'Neill & Xiao (2010) conclude that this is down to the 24/7 nature of the industry and the face-time culture for employees. Mulvaney, et al (2007) conclude that performance indicators in the industry often lean towards being evaluated by the hours being spent at the workplace over the quality of the work being done. This leaves, according to Mulvaney, et al (2007), employees feeling like they cannot take time off or use their paid/unpaid leave for family reasons. Cleveland, et al (2007) further conclude that because of work related stress and burnout employees are deciding to leave the hospitality industry to seek a better work-life balance in order to avoid family conflict.

A major root of conflict between work and family life is shift work according to Cleveland, et al (2007) who define shift work as “work during nonstandard hours”.

During nonstandard hours in basic terms is working hours outside the 9 to 5 norm of most jobs. Almeida (2014) concludes that shift work poses great problems for those trying to balance their work and home lives and that this is predominant in the hospitality industry. Presser (2004) adds to these theories by recognising shift work being related to greater marital disagreements and child related problems than work schedules that involve weekends and holidays.

Staines & Pleck (1983) identified that the number of working hours an employee in the hospitality industry completes has a clear link to the quality and production levels of these employees. This is quite critical when speaking about work-life balance in the hospitality industry as Buick & Thomas (2001) concluded that working long hours does lead to high levels of burnout in hospitality workers. Choi & Kim (2012) also found through their investigation into the Korean hospitality industry that time was often the source of conflict between an employees work life and personal life. Choi & Kim (2012) state that the “issue seems to be caused by typical characteristics of a hotel job such as shift work, year round business, long working hours and restricted weekend or holiday closing” and how this takes away from the personal lives of employees.

Lee, et al (2002) found that when workload reduction was introduced there is an enhancement of well-being which incorporates reduced stress levels and fatigue and fewer reports of health problems and absences from work. Lee, et al (2002) also found that there were reports of enhanced life satisfaction and increased involvement in family life from employees when workload reduction was introduced. This resulted in satisfied employees with a higher production and quality rate. This result is backed up by the investigation of Choi & Kim (2012) who concluded that an increase in family and home involvement actually resulted in the employee performing better in their workplace.

While there is a perception that stress and work and two variables that cross over and are unavoidable Ross (1995) concluded that work stress is now a major cause of concern for employees and employers which impacts negatively on service quality. This is a major issue as Ross (1995) is yet another author who points out the link between service quality and employee satisfaction. Ross (1995) does propose

however that management should be willing to accommodate employees in terms of work-life balance if it means an improvement in service quality.

There no reason why an Irish hotel cannot put in place a positive work-life balance programme for their employees. One only has to look at an article written for Hospitality Biz (2015) on the Marriott, India. The Marriott aims for “long-term success and sustainability through its people” and therefore embeds a “culture that encourages its employees to maintain a healthy work-life balance” (Hospitality Biz, 2015). Irish hotels can learn from the Marriott, India’s example and build a culture of people within their own organisation. Through my research I aim to see what work-life balance currently exists in Irish hotels which would provide us with an indication of how far away the Irish hospitality industry is from the Indian hospitality industry.

It is clear from this research into different articles, cases and reports that the hospitality industry has a negative image in terms of the hours, stress levels, low pay and the impact it has on the other parts of an employee’s life. There are examples in the industry such as with the Marriott in India that a positive work-life balance can exist within the hospitality sector. From the investigation we will get a clear perspective of the work-life balance that exists for employees in the Irish hospitality sector and it will be interesting to see of these results will be like the Marriott in India or prove the different authors right in their investigations and views.

2.3. CONCLUSION

This chapter has covered the two main areas in which my research question is based; Work-Life Balance and the Irish Hospitality Industry. As you can see from this chapter there is very little research into work-life balance in the Irish hospitality sector and certainly less than there has been in other sectors and industries. The aim of this study will hope to investigate the gap in research and provide an insight into work-life balance in and Irish context.

As far as work-life balance is concerned we have witnessed numerous definitions and the major theoretical model used in understanding work-life balance; Social Exchange, Scarcity and Expansion, Spillover and Crossover and finally the

Psychological Contract. A vital theme that emerged throughout the literature review is this model being discussed, not in name, but in concept throughout the different articles, cases and reports. What was very interesting from the literature is the different motivators for different employees depending on Home Life, Origin, Age and Gender. This literature review highlighted the importance and relevance of the work-life balance topic through the examination of different cases. These cases were in depth investigations into work-life balance in different sectors such as Banking, the Legal Profession, Administration and the Power Industry.

Through the literature and research conducted into the Irish Hospitality Sector we now have a clearer view as to the condition and economic position of the industry. The literature provided clear sign as to the vital importance of the industry to the economy and employment levels of Ireland and to the European Union. It is noticeable that the Irish hospitality sector is growing and quite strong when you view the growth rate of the contribution of the sector to the Irish and European Economies but also the growth rate of hotels in Ireland. Through research of the sector one very important note was evident, that being the importance of employees to the success of their own individual hotel and that of the sector as a whole.

What was extremely difficult to research was an investigation into work-life balance in the hospitality industry due to the lack of previous attention but a case was found where there is a positive work-life balance in the Marriott in India. Different authors do not paint a pretty picture of working in the hospitality industry but there is a gap in the research as to the Irish hospitality sector.

It is the intention of this investigation to fill that gap and provide a valuable insight into the work-life balance that exists for workers in the Irish hospitality sector. The exact gaps in the research this investigation hopes to fill will be examined in more detail in the next chapter.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

As stated in the previous chapter there is a noticeable gap in the literature as to the level of work-life balance within the Irish hospitality sector. The literature highlighted the importance of work-life balance to the success of any organisation with authors such as Kalliath & Brough, Lockwood and Greenhaus publishing in depth research into the topic. The topic does have a lack of examination when it comes to the hospitality sector and especially in terms of the Irish hospitality industry. We can see through the work of Barron et al (2007) and Barron (2008) what the working environment is like for hospitality workers with long hours, high stress levels and low pay being the main concerns. It seems from the literature that there is very little on offer to hospitality employees in terms of work-life balance policies and that this is severely affecting service levels (Ross, 1995) and retention in the industry (Ghiselli & Zhao, 2016). This investigation aims to discover what work life balance does exist in the Irish hospitality and the following research questions have been formulated to aide in that discovery.

3.1. MAIN RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The main objective and title of this research is:

An Investigation into the Work-Life balance that exists for workers in the Irish Hospitality Industry.

In order to fully evaluate this objective, the following research objectives are being investigated:

3.1.1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 1

What are the hospitality industry's employee's perceptions of work-life balance in the Irish hospitality industry?

Throughout literature there is very little information as to what an employee's perceptions of work-life balance are. It has been concluded that work in the hospitality industry is less than ideal in terms of hours, pay and stress levels (Barron, et al., 2007) but is this true? Does the reality match the theory? Through this

research objective it will become quite clear as to the level of work-life balance that currently exists for workers in the Irish hospitality industry.

3.1.2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 2

What is the difference between levels of management from bottom level employees to senior management in terms of work-life balance and the effectiveness of work-life balance as a tool for management?

While reading through literature on implementing work-life balance it became clear that one of the challenges of implementing work-life balance policies was company culture and more specifically manager's culture. As noted by De Cieri et al (2005) managers tend to have overcome the difficulties of working in the hospitality industry and are now programmed into thinking that is norm for all industries and organisations. From this research objective the aim is to see if work-life balance has been positively or negatively impacted by an employee's progression up the organisation. This objective will also examine a manager's view of work-life balance policies in terms of their usefulness in the hospitality industry. In order to examine whether or not work-life balance is a tool for management it will be examined from the view of the employees as well.

3.1.3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 3

Is there a difference in work-life balance between different age groups?

As with the previous research objective the literature proposes the idea that work-life balance perceptions change with age. We can see from work done by Deery (2002) that there is a high turnover of generation y workers in the industry while research conducted by Roberts (2005) and Sommer & Sopp (2006) show how important work-life balance and having a healthy lifestyle is for generation y workers. Ghiselli & Zhao (2016) have a different perspective on age in terms of work-life balance. The belief here is that with age comes more commitment levels at home and in an employee's private life. This research objective will highlight which authors are correct in their conclusions in terms of the Irish hospitality industry.

3.1.4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 4

Is there a difference in work-life Balance between different departments in the hospitality industry? (Bar, Restaurant, Kitchen, Reception, Accommodation)

As we can see from the report compiled by the Sherry Fitzgerald Group (2014) all departments in a hotel have become profitable over the years, not just accommodation. In reaction to this it has become evident that employees in the different departments may have different attitudes towards their quality of work-life balance. This is a gap in the research as all previous research describes employees of an organisation as a whole but in the hotel industry employees have different rota's and responsibilities depending on their department. This investigation aims to fill this gap in the research.

3.1.5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 5

What are the motivators that affect employee's perceptions of work-life balance?

This research objective aims to gauge the different motivators that are in an employee's lives and see which one influences their work-life balance choices. Sommer & Sopp (2006) identify that young people can be ambitious but also value their life style. We see that other factors such as gender and origin have a role to play in what motivates an employee in achieving satisfaction in their lives. This research objective will analyse the different views of employees in the Irish hospitality sector and provide a clearer picture of what motivates employees.

These are the research objectives that will help me analyse what kind of work-life balance exists for workers in the Irish hospitality industry.

4. METHODOLOGY

A very insightful quote from astronaut Neil Armstrong went like:

“Research is creating new knowledge.”

Graue (2015) concludes that from this quote conducting research is the logical consequence to the emergence of a question that has not been answered yet. The previous two chapters have outlined the main basis of this investigation which is based around the work-life balance that exists for Irish hospitality workers; a question that has not been answered yet. In addition to this I have outlined five key research objectives that will aide with the main research topic. These research objects will offer a valuable insight into work-life balance,different views and practical applications of the research area.

4.1. RESEARCH THEORY

According to Saunders et al (2009) the research process is a set of stages or steps that a researcher advances through in order to gather and report valid and reliable information. In order to better describe these stages Saunders et al (2009) developed the research onion.

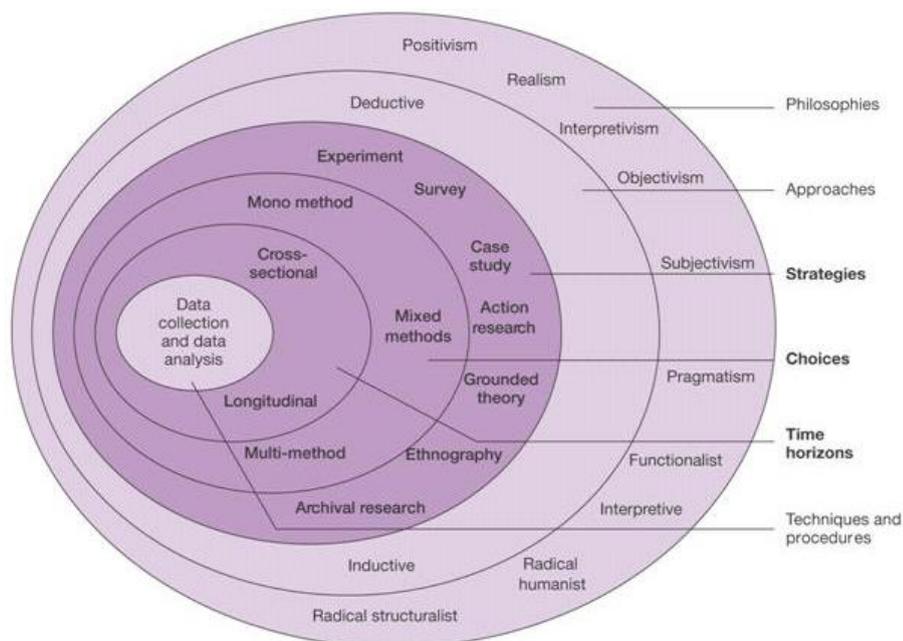


Figure 4.1-1: The Reseach Onion (Saunders et al., 2009)

I have decided to adopt the Research Onion in developing the research process for this investigation. The six layers that must be considered, according to Saunders et al (2009) in developing a research process are:

1. Research Philosophies
2. Research Approaches
3. Research Strategies
4. Research Choices
5. Time Horizons
6. Techniques and Procedures

Each of these layers will be analysed and applied to this investigation in building the theory and application behind the methodology.

4.2. RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

According to Saunders et al (2009) the research philosophy you adopt in your research encompasses the way you view the world. The reason Saunders et al (2009) state that this is important is because “these assumptions will underpin your research strategy and the methods you choose as part of that strategy”. It is important for researchers to be aware of their philosophical commitments that are made through the choice of research strategy and the impact that this has the understanding of what is being investigated (Johnson & Clark, 2006).

Saunders et al (2009) concludes that there are three major ways of viewing research philosophy: epistemology, ontology and axiology. Epistemology is the “: the researcher’s view regarding what constitutes acceptable knowledge” stated by Saunders et al (2009). Ontology as stated by Saunders et al (2009) is “the researcher’s view of the nature of reality or being”. Axiology is “the researcher’s view of the role of values in research” (Saunders, et al., 2009). It is essential for any piece of research for the researcher to understand these three views when deciding a research philosophy. The research philosophy of interpretivism has been chosen as the research philosophy for this piece of research. The main principles and approach of interpretivism will be discussed in the next section.

4.2.1. INTERPRETIVISM

The central crucial point of interpretivism is that the researcher has to adopt an empathetic stance (Saunders, et al., 2009). This means that the researcher must attempt to see the world from the point of view of the subjects (Saunders, et al., 2009). Interpretivism preaches that the researcher has to understand that there are differences between people in different situations (Saunders, et al., 2009). What these points show is that the researcher must see the subjects as human beings and not machines or computers (Saunders, et al., 2009). A final point that Saunders et al (2009) make is that the interpretivist perspective is highly appropriate in fields such as human resources because situations in a field like this are complex and unique.

In terms of this investigation because there is such a human aspect to the study interpretivism is the best research philosophy in this case. The results that will be attained are expected to be varying from subject to subject as the investigation of work-life balance is a very personal topic. In this case no two human beings are alike. Each and every employee of an organisation has their own unique lifestyle and home life outside of the workplace. It is because of this that the researcher must see that the different subjects will view the world as only they can.

4.3. RESEARCH APPROACH

Now that a research philosophy appropriate for this investigation has been identified and selected the next step in the process is finalising an approach. According to Saunders et al (2009) there are two types of research approach: Induction and Deduction.

4.3.1. INDUCTION

The induction approach focuses on building and formulating theory around the results of your investigation (Saunders, et al., 2009). With the induction approach the researcher would get the views and thoughts of the employees involved in the subject topic and would then analyse and make sense of the information therefore building a theory around these results (Saunders, et al., 2009). It is important to note that using the induction approach may lead to a theory that mirrors an already existing one but the researcher would have produced this theory as a result of data

collected rather than tested data against a pre-existing theory (Saunders, et al., 2009). The Induction approach is better suited to the use of quantitative data as it allows the sample to express their own feelings better than qualitative data.

4.3.2. DEDUCTION

Deduction in contrast to Induction involves the formulating of a theory and putting that theory through a rigorous test (Saunders, et al., 2009). The approach involves developing hypotheses, testing these hypotheses and modifying the theory after analysing the results (Saunders, et al., 2009). The Deduction approach is used quite often in the natural sciences as there are laws for the basis of explanation.

For this investigation it is vital that the subjects involved are allowed to express themselves about work-life balance. The topic involves a lot of personal expression and in that way the researcher must be able to empathise with the subject. Therefore, the philosophy of interpretivism was chosen for this investigation. With the research approach the same basis applies as with the philosophy. The subjects need to be able to express themselves and in order to achieve that the researcher cannot be testing the results against a pre-existing theory but should be developing a theory based in the results of the investigation. This provides the researcher and the subjects with the freedom to express their true feelings towards the subject of work-life balance. It is for these reasons that the investigation will follow the Induction Approach.

4.4. RESEARCH STRATEGY

There are numerous different research strategies but according to Yin (2003) all of the multiple strategies can be used for exploratory, descriptive and explanatory research. Saunders et al (2009) point out that no research strategy is superior or inferior to another but it is how the strategy applies to your research that determines what strategy is appropriate. Saunders et al (2009) continue to state that the research strategy will depend on the “research question(s) and objectives, the extent of existing knowledge, the amount of time and other resources you have available, as well as your own philosophical underpinnings”. Saunders et al (2009) identify seven strategies that a researcher must consider, these being:

- Experiment
- Survey
- Case Study
- Action Research
- Grounded Theory
- Ethnography
- Archival Research

In the case of this investigation it is clear that the best suited strategy is Grounded Theory. Grounded Theory is, according to Glaser & Strauss (1967) a clear example of the inductive approach. Goulding (2002) concludes the theory is based around the research of people and their behaviours. This makes the Grounded Theory the most suitable strategy for this investigation and a topic such as work-life balance. The theory is in alignment with the investigations philosophy and approach which is key in developing a strong methodology.

4.5. RESEARCH CHOICE

For this investigation the research choice will be a mono approach. The mono approach according to Saunders et al (2009) is utilising a single data collection technique with the same single data analysis technique. In terms of this investigation the use of qualitative data collection will be by interviews and the results will be analysed by research objective and the information relating to that objective.

4.6. TIME HORIZONS

Saunders et al (2009) note that a researcher must consider if they want their research to be:

1. Quick snapshot taken at particular time. (Cross-Sectional)
Or
2. Series of snapshots taken over a period of time (Longitudinal)

The nature of this study means the research will be cross-sectional due to the time frame involved the research will be a quick snapshot of what kind of work-life balance exists for workers in the Irish hospitality industry.

4.7. TECHNIQUE AND PROCEDURE

This section will apply the theory already gathered, in terms of philosophy, approach, strategy, choice and time, and apply it to this piece of research. To do this the ethical considerations, sample and the Interview Questions will be finalised.

4.7.1. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The main ethical consideration for any researcher to take note of, according to Saunders et al (2009), is to beware of causing harm or intruding on a participant's private life during the data collection stage. With work-life balance being such a personal topic this is extremely important. This being that some participant's may not feel comfortable with certain questions being asked about their personal lives. I must keep in mind that for some workers work and home life are two very different environments that they do not want mixed. Some participants will be quite reluctant to discuss their personal lives and this is something to be aware of for the researcher.

In order to avoid a situation where a subject was feeling uncomfortable with a certain question a brief statement was made for each participant stating that the interview process is completely voluntary and any question can be unanswered if the participant feel uncomfortable. The statement outlined that the details and information gathered during the data collection phase would be anonymous and confidential. The statement highlighted the fact that no personal details such as name and contact details would be published in the investigation. A copy of the statement provided for all interviewees is contained in Appendix 1.

4.7.2. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

For this investigation it was decided that the interviews should follow a semi-structured format in that no interview would be identical. This allowed the interviewer the freedom to ask more questions if the interviewee if they were nervous or needed a helping hand in developing their answer. The interview questions were designed in accordance with the research objectives and were not overly specific so that the interviewee could interpret and answer in their own unique way which follows the philosophy, approach and strategy of this investigation. This allowed the interviewee to answer as they viewed the world

rather than being guided by the interview questions. A full listing of all interview questions that were asked are listed in Appendix 2. It is important to note that not all questions were asked to all interviewees as they depended on management level.

4.7.3. SAMPLE

Following ethical considerations and finalising the interview questions the researcher conducted eleven interviews of Irish hospitality employees from a range of ages, departments and roles. The response to the interviews was positive with participants from all areas of a hotel's main functions interviewed. The response to the interviews is skewed towards males and the bar department however this is taken into account when analysing the data and drawing conclusions.

The demographics of the sample are broken down in the table and charts on the following pages. They are broken down into the areas of age, gender, department and relationship status as these are the demographics that are most important of the topic of work-life balance. All of the participants are full time employees in the industry. An important aspect of the topic is about the hours that workers in the industry have to do and as the participants are all full time this will provide realistic results for the investigation. Organising the sample into the different demographics is essential for this investigation in order to determine trends and patterns in the analysis stage of the investigation.

Table 4.7-1: Breakdown of Research Sample

Participant	Age Category	Gender	Relationship Status	Department	Position
A	18-24	Male	In a Relationship	Bar	F&B Assistant
B	18-24	Female	In a Relationship	Bar	F&B Assistant
C	18-24	Male	Single	Bar	F&B Assistant
D	25-30	Male	In a Relationship	Bar	Head Barman
E	18-24	Male	Single	Bar	F&B Assistant
F	25-30	Male	In a Relationship	Maintenance	Maintenance Operative
G	31-40	Male	Single	Management	General Manager
H	41-50	Male	In a Relationship	Kitchen	Kitchen Porter
I	41-50	Female	In a Relationship	Kitchen	Head Chef
J	25-30	Female	Single	Reception	Receptionist
K	31-40	Female	In a Relationship	Accommodation	Accommodation Assistant

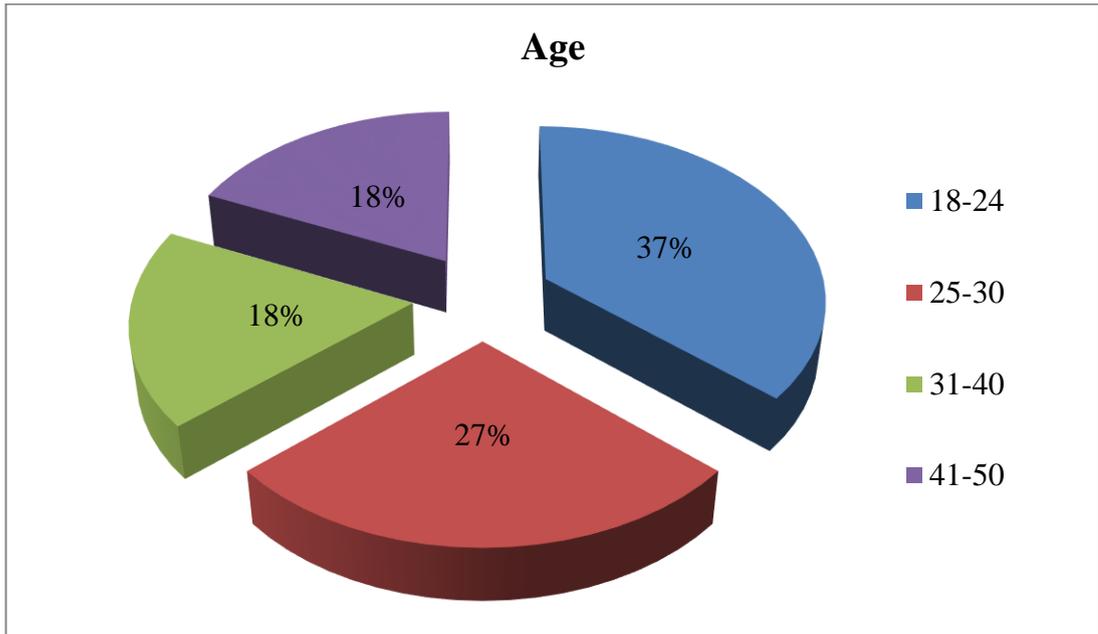


Figure 4.7-1: Age Demographic of Research Sample

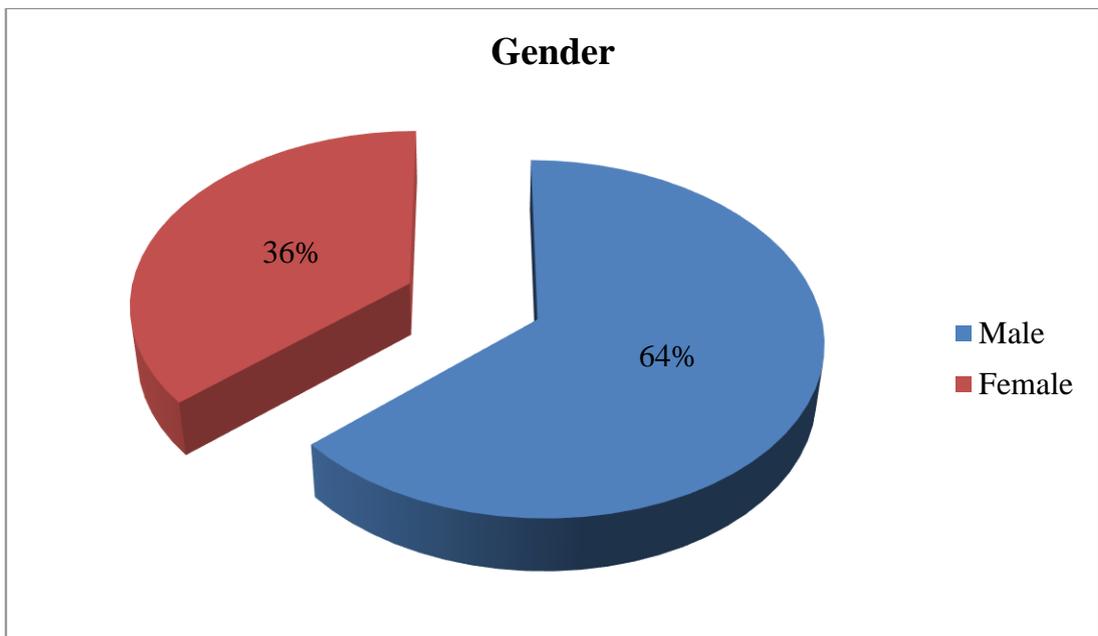


Figure 4.7-2: Gender Demographic of Research Sample

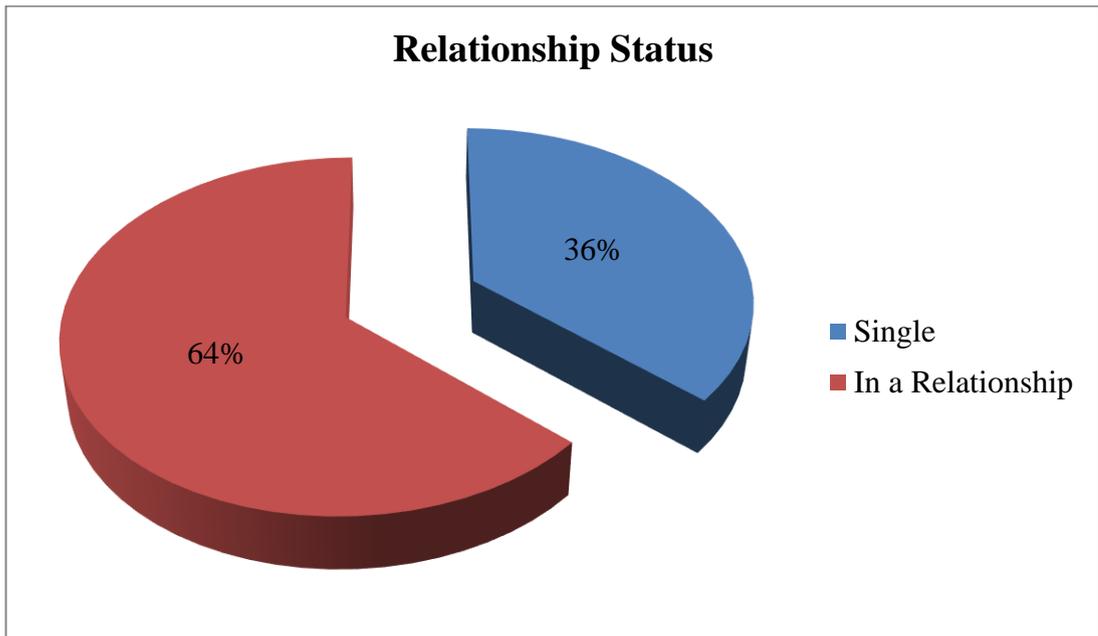


Figure 4.7-3: Relationship Status Demographic of Research Sample

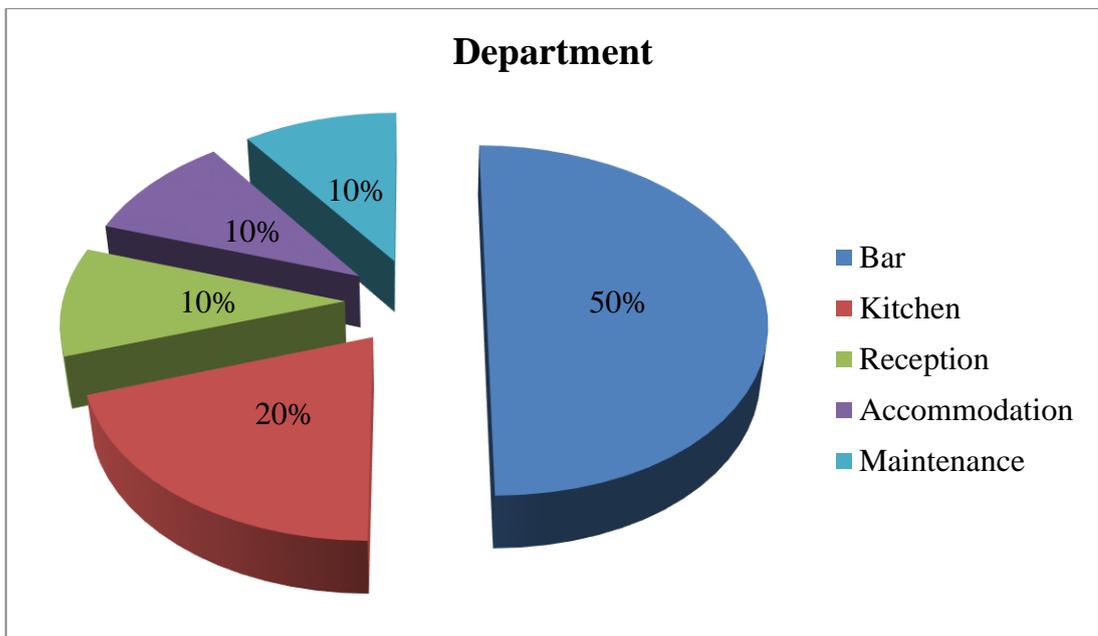


Figure 4.7-4: Department Demographic of Research Sample

4.8. CONCLUSION

In this chapter the methodology for this investigation was finalised. The stages that the methodology follows are set out in the research onion, a model developed by Saunders et al (2009). The process resulted in the research philosophy of interpretivism being chosen as the most suitable philosophy for this topic and investigation. An inductive approach followed by the research strategy grounded theory was also deemed to be the best choices for this investigation and what it hopes to achieve. The researcher decided upon a mono research choice and concluded that this piece of research would be a cross-sectional piece. In terms of applying all of this methodological theory to this investigation the researcher first considered the ethics of this investigation and what areas needed to be approached in a more delicate manner than others. After this consideration the interview questions were drawn up and applied to the sample. The sample was divided up into different demographical areas that best suited the topic of work-life balance and the research objectives. The following chapter will provide the results of this methodology followed up by analysis, conclusions and recommendations.

5. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

In the previous chapter I outlined that interviews would be the research tool used for this investigation. The researcher was very fortunate to attain eleven interviewees who were from a broad range of departments in the hospitality industry. In this chapter the findings of these interviews will be examined. As the interviews were built with the aid of the research objectives the researcher believes that the best way to present the findings is by organising the data by these objectives. The discussion chapter will be structured similarly. As noted in the previous chapter the sample was skewed towards the bar department of hospitality and is predominately male which will be taken into account before any conclusions are made from this data. A full transcript of all interviews is contained in Appendix 3.

5.1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 1

What are the hospitality industry's employee's perceptions of work-life balance in the Irish hospitality industry?

As previously stated there is very little information in the world of literature as to what an employee's perspective of work-life balance is. Yes, there are plenty of academic definitions and conclusions come to from authors such as Lockwood and Greenhaus but what are the employee's thoughts? With this objective the aim was to investigate whether or not conclusions, such as the one made by Barron et al (2007) when it was concluded that work in the hospitality industry involved long and unsociable hours, low pay scales and high levels of stress, were true in terms of the Irish hospitality industry. In order to develop answers to this research objective there were clear questions relating to what work-life balance meant to the interviewee, existed for the interviewee and if there was a platform for a positive work-life balance to be developed.

A simple question that was put to the interviewees was: Are you satisfied working in the hospitality industry? Interestingly from this question, when it was broken down, 55% of the interviewees were satisfied by their roles in the industry with 45% not satisfied. A note from this result that should be taken on board is that of the interviewees who were not satisfied with their life in the hospitality industry they

were all from the bar department. This question does not delve into the topic of work-life balance but is a simple over view of the happiness of employees in the industry. A worrying statement from participant A is that they foresaw a future for themselves in the industry, in Ireland and internationally, and have been put off by their experiences over the last number of years. Other points that the interviewees pointed out was the unhealthy, long and unsociable hours. Participant C points out that the industry is just a stepping stone for him and that he is not challenged by the job. These are the results of a question that doesn't delve into the topic of work-life balance it is already noticeable that there are answers related to the topic as to why employees are not satisfied in the industry. As we can see from participants B, D and E they point out the hours they work and overtime as a major points of dissatisfaction in the industry. Of the interviewees who are satisfied within the industry participants G and H also mention the hours that they either have worked or are working in the industry. Both of these participants do not have a problem with the hours that they work with participant G concluding that is was the hours along with hard work that got him to where he is in the industry today. Participant H pointed out that he prefers working and being busy so that is the reason the hours are of no concern for him.

It is interesting to note that a simple question like this can bring about points that are related to the topic of work-life balance. So what kind of responses were gathered when participants where asked directly about work-life balance? One of the main objectives of this research is to gather information as to what workers in the hospitality industry believe work-life balance is. This was measured by being outright and asking the interviewees: What is your understanding of work-life balance? The answers are difficult to gauge as the participants were reluctant to try and give a direct definition. If we are to break it down into work, life and balance 73% of the sample cited that a balance between work and life is what work-life balance is about, 18% believe that living is more important than working and 9% believe that working should come before living. Of the participants that cited life as more important than work A and E both believe that you work to live and you do not live to work. The opposite of this is participant F who states that work provides him with the lifestyle that he lives and because of this it is extremely important. Participant F does highlight the value he places on his lifestyle but believes the only

way to achieve a lifestyle is to work. Of the remainder of the participants a balance is between work and life is the most important aspect of work-life balance. This may be given away in the name 'work-life balance' but as we have seen there are people who value one above the other when it comes to work-life balance.

Two further questions were asked in order to gain an insight into the work-life balance that exists for Irish hospitality workers. The first of these being: How would you describe your current work-life balance? The results from this interview show that 55% of the participants feel as if they have a bad work-life balance with 45% feeling as though they have a good work-life balance. Of the 55% it has to be noted that 83% of that figure work in the bar department of the hospitality industry. Of the 55% all of these participants highlighted hours of work as a major problem for them in trying to attain a positive work-life balance. Of these answers overtime, shift work and unsociable hours are all noted as reasons for a poor work-life balance which participant B feeling like they lived in their uniform. A worrying statement from participants A, B, C, D and E is that they are drained from the work they do physically and in the case of A and B mentally tired. In the case of participant A, they felt miserable from the burnout associated with their working life. Participants C and E identify that because of the hours and the physical energy required for their jobs that they have either reduced the amount of sports that they are involved in or in the case of participant E just given up all sports they were involved in. From the 45% that maintained they possessed a good work-life balance two of the participants cited that they worked long and unsocial hours as well but in the case of participant G they viewed the situation as a way to progress their career. Participant H identified that they preferred working and being busy so the situation of long hours suited them. Participants F and K work the same shift each day allowing them to develop a routine unlike the other participants.

The second question that gained an insight into work-life balance was: Do you believe the organisation you work for provides you with the platform to have a positive work-life balance? From this question 82% of the participants felt like the organisation did not provide a platform for them to achieve a positive work-life balance while 18% did. Participants A, B, C, D and H all identify management as a problem with providing a platform and claim that the management are often

uninterested and do not seem concerned about employee welfare. Participants G and J who both highlight that the organisation do not provide a platform to achieve a positive work-life balance state that it is the industry that they operate in that prevents work-life balance from being achieved. Participant K also highlights that the industry does cause problems such as working weekends but that she believes her organisation provides her with a good platform because of her straight shifts and two days off in a row. The is something highlighted by participant E who doesn't get two days off in a row and says that this stops him from attaining a positive work-life balance. Participant I states that because of the tight expenses structure he operates under he cannot provide his employees with this platform and that it has led to long hours and high levels of stress.

Of course the topic under investigation is work-life balance and in order to achieve a true insight into the work-life balance that exists for participants it is vital that life is examined in addition to work life. In order to achieve results in this category two questions were asked:

1. Are you happy with your life outside of work?
2. Does your home life negatively impact on your work-life balance?

In response to the first question 56% of the participants were not happy with their live outside of work while 44% were. Of the 55% of employees that are not happy with their life outside of work 100% of these employees blame work and the knock on effect it has on their home lives. Participants A, B, C, D, E and H all claim that the hours they work and the fatigue associated with these long and unsociable working hours are negatively impacting on their lives outside of work. Of the participants that are happy with their lives outside of work participant G identifies that he does not have that much time for life outside of work but that is not something he sees as negative but essential in progressing his career. Participant H states that he enjoys his life outside of work but only because he has control over rostering his own working hours. Participants F and K both enjoy consistent and regular working hours and this contributes to them being happy with their lives outside of work. In response to the second question all participants' state that their home life has never impacted on their work-life balance meaning that all participants

who claim to have a negative work-life balance associate this entirely with their working lives.

These are the results that directly apply to this research objective and the results that will form the basis of discussion around this objective in the next chapter.

5.2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 2

What is the difference between levels of management from bottom level employees to senior management in terms of work-life balance and the effectiveness of work-life balance as a tool for management?

The aim of this objective is to examine work-life balance in terms of management. This was examined by obtaining information as to whether or not work-life balance has improved over the years for management and if management and employees believe that work-life balance can be used as a tool for management. In order to attain this information, the following direct questions were asked in the interviews:

1. Do you feel as you have moved up in your organisation that your work-life balance has improved?
2. Do you believe as you have progressed in your career your work-life balance has improved?
3. In what ways do you think work-life balance could be improved in your department?
4. In what ways do you think work-life balance could be improved in your organisation?
5. Do you believe you as a manager provide your employees with the opportunity to have a positive work-life balance?

It is important to note that of the sample only three participants have progressed up the management chain of their organisations, these being participants D, G and I.

Participants D, G and I were all asked the first two questions with various answers being given. Participant D who has progressed to being the Head Barman in his organisation states that since he has been promoted he actually does more hours and his stress levels have increased. He highlights the fact that the promotion has taken away even more of his personal time than it did before. Participant G who is highly career driven points out that they willingly gave up the opportunity of having a positive work-life balance in order to further their careers. Participant I states that

they have had an improvement in work-life balance as they has progressed in their careers but claims that this is partially down to his own hard work in putting into place clear authority structures and hiring capable employees. Participant I highlights that this has given them the opportunity to feel comfortable taking time off to spend with family.

In order to gain an insight into whether or not work-life balance could be used as a tool for management it was necessary to get the view of the bottom line employees. In order to gain this insight the participants were asked if how work-life balance could be improved in their department and organisation. This gave the participants the opportunity to show what they felt would improve their work-life balance and therefore their working lives. If the participants were capable of coming up with reasonable ideas, then this shows that yes there is a basis for work-life balance being used as a tool for management. For the question relating to a participant's specific department 90% of the participants, asked this question, believe that work life balance could be improved. From the participants asked this question there were different responses as to what would help achieve a positive work-life balance. 50% highlighted hiring more staff as a solution. 40% stated hourly changes such as flexitime in the case of participant F, reduced hours in terms of overtime and a plan to get a weekend off for the majority if the bar participants. 40% stated that a change in management in terms of organisation, sympathy and communication would help them achieve a better work-life balance. Interestingly 10% of the participants asked stated that work-life balance in their department could not be improved as it was already quite adequate.

A different question was put to the participants by asking how work-life balance could be improved in the organisation as a whole. This question opens the participants to speak for the organisation as a whole and we get a greater insight into the industry and not just an in depth view of specific departments. Of the sample 73% believed work-life could be improved in the organisation, 18% believed it could not and 9% stated that they did not have sufficient information of the whole organisation to be able to answer the question. Of the participants asked 9% again highlighted hours as a problem yet again. 36% highlighted staff needed to be hired in departments across the board to reduce stress levels and burnout. 18% again

highlighted managerial incapability as an area that could be improved. 9% stated that communication between departments is something that needed to be improved because of knock on impacts of one department's decision and the effects caused by that decision. Interestingly 9% of the participants highlighted that a similar aspect to the communication but phrased it differently. Participant E highlighted that the departments do not work well together which is a sign of poor synergy. What is trying to be expressed here is that the synergy of the organisation needs to be improved. Of the 18% that said the organisation could not be improved in terms of work-life balance, participant G claims that the cost involved in improving work-life balance is not worth the reward.

The results are quite clear that the vast majority of the participants believe that work-life balance can be used as a tool for management but do the current managers believe that they provide a platform for their employees to have a positive work-life balance? This question was put to the two participants, who are in high level management, participant's G and I. Participant G states that he provides the employees with the same opportunities that were on offer to him when he was progressing through the industry. It is clear from this answer that participant G does not believe in progressing the work-life balances of his employees and he already stated in a previous answer that the results of work-life balance do not equal the costs. Participant I states that she does not provide her employees with the opportunity for a positive work-life balance and as stated in a previous answer puts this down to cost savings attitude of the organisation. She believes that as a knock on effect of this there is enormous pressure on chefs, which she states they thrive off, but the real losers here are the kitchen porters. Participant I claims that because of these cost restrictions the kitchen porters have to work the worst hours.

It is clear to see that the majority of employees believe that work-life balance is a tool that management can avail of, however both top level management do not take advantage of this. What these results also show us is the differences of work-life balance between the different management levels. The relationships between these results will be further discussed and analysed against literature in the discussion chapter.

5.3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 3

Is there a difference in work-life balance between different age groups?

For this research objective the aim is to view how work-life balance changes with age. The theory behind this research objective has different viewpoints with one set of authors claiming work-life balance is more important to the younger generations while the other set of authors believe that older generations place a higher value on work life balance. In order to evaluate this objective in the discussion chapter all of the previous questions and results are relevant. If you are to discover how work-life balance changes with age in a cross sectional study you have to compare the older participant with the younger participants. This will take place in the discussion chapter where the results of all questions will be compared in terms of age and placed against the relevant literature.

5.4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 4

Is there a difference in work-life balance between different departments in the hospitality industry? (Bar, Restaurant, Kitchen, Reception, Accommodation)

In the literature review a gap in the research was found as to the different attitudes of hospitality workers towards work-life balance depending on the department that they worked in. In order to evaluate this gap, it was essential that the sample for this research contained participants from multiple departments in a standard Irish hotel. In the sample for this research there are participants from multiple departments including bar, kitchen, reception, accommodation and maintenance. In order to discover the difference in work-life balance depending on department all questions in the interviews are relevant. This means that the results, as with research objective 3, of all previously examined interview questions will be used in the discussion chapter for this objective.

5.5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 5

What are the motivators that affect employee's perceptions of work-life balance?

The aim with this objective was to identify what motivated an employee in terms of work-life balance. We witnessed from the literature that factors such as gender and

origin can come into play with this topic. Unfortunately, in this sample all of the participants are Irish so it will be impossible to see results based on origin. As with the previous two objectives all of the questions in this interview have relevance to this objective and will be analysed in the discussion chapter however one question was built with this objective in mind: What do you view as the ideal work-life balance for you? By asking this question we get a view into what motivates an employee into obtaining a positive work-life balance.

With this question it is impossible to organise the data into a yes or no category so the answers have been divided into categories. Of the sample 64% included their social lives when describing their ideal work-life balance, 18% highlighted sports, 9% their wage level, 45% family time and 9% stated that they were currently in their ideal work-life balance. It is important to note here that some participants included more than one area in their ideal work-life balance. For example, participant A described a situation where he got a weekend off for social reasons but also included not missing sporting commitments anymore. In this sense it is difficult to tie down one specific motivator to a participant but it is clear the four main categories in terms of work-life balance in this study are wages, sports, social life and family.

5.6. CONCLUSION

As stated at the beginning of this chapter the findings were presented by research objective because the interviews were built with the objectives in mind. Some of these objectives incorporate all questions in the interview while some questions are more relevant to certain objectives than others. In this chapter all interview questions were analysed with the exception of background in the hospitality industry. This is for a few reasons. This is the first real question asked to all participants and was viewed as a way to ease the interviewee into the interview. Apart from making the interviewee comfortable this question also allows the interviewer to see what experience the interviewee has in the hospitality industry and whether or not this influences their answers. This question will become more relevant in the discussion chapter.

6. DISCUSSION

This chapter will consist of a discussion of the findings that were highlighted throughout the previous chapter. This chapter aims to identify key themes and areas of interest in the findings and compare these to the relevant literature. These findings will provide an Irish perspective against these literary sources, which are often internationally inclined. This data will be discussed and arranged as in the previous chapter by research objective. This will provide the opportunity to gain a true understanding of the research objective in order to gain a proper conclusion. The following are a reminder of the research questions:

Main Research Objective: An Investigation into the Work-Life Balance that Exists for Workers in the Irish Hospitality Industry.

- **Research Objective 1:** What are the hospitality industry's employee's perceptions of work-life balance in the Irish hospitality industry?
- **Research Objective 2:** What is the difference between levels of management from bottom level employees to senior management in terms of work-life balance and the effectiveness of work-life balance as a tool for management?
- **Research Objective 3:** Is there a difference in work-life balance between different age groups?
- **Research Objective 4:** Is there a difference in work-life balance between different departments in the hospitality industry? (Bar, Restaurant, Kitchen, Reception, Accommodation)
- **Research Objective 5:** What are the motivators that affect employee's perceptions of work-life balance?

6.1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 1

As stated already throughout literature there is very little information as regards to the perceptions of the employees in terms of their work-life balance. This objective aimed not only to gauge the participant's work-life balance but also what they believed work-life balance to be. What is interesting to view from the results is that not all participants felt as if work-life balance is actually a balance between work

and life. If we are to look at literature, there is an emphasis on balance. Greenhaus et al (2003) speak about 'equal satisfaction' between the two roles of work and life. Kalliath & Brough (2008) likewise highlight that work and life are 'compatible'. From this piece of research, it was found that yes 73% believed in a balance between work and life however the interesting result is that the remaining 27% of the sample viewed the topic in a different mind. 18% believe that lifestyle is more important than work. This portion of the research believes in the phrase 'work to live, not live to work'. The remaining 9% believe that work is more important than life as without work you cannot live. This leaves for an interesting result in that all authors speak about work-life balance being about balance and stability. This research clearly shows that in the eyes of employees it is not always about balance. This is a predicament in that all definitions of work-life balance speak about balance but should they have incorporated into them that it is not always about balance?

Of the themes that came from the questions associated with this question there is one clear problem in terms of work-life balance in the hospitality industry. The problem is the hours that the participants from this research are working on a daily basis. If we take a look at the literature, there are a handful of authors who determine that the hour's hospitality workers are working are a major cause for a negative work-life balance. Kelley-Patterson & George (2001) report that workers are required to work long hours. Barron et al (2007) found that the hours worked by hospitality workers didn't allow for a lifestyle. Mulvaney et al (2007) state that workers feel they cannot take time off for family reasons or take advantage of their paid leave. Choi & Kim (2012) conclude that working long hours is a characteristic of the hospitality industry. From this study 91% of the participants mentions long or unsociable hours during their interviews. With some of the participants they did acknowledge that this was not a problem for them but it still remains that long working hours was mentioned. This shows a trend of long working hours in the industry above what the normal working week of 40 hours.

A trend associated with hours that was quite noticeable in the interviews is the mentioning of shift work and splits. Almeida (2014) concluded shift work poses great problems for those trying to balance their working and home lives. Shift and split work is something highlighted by participant H who stated that it currently suits

him but may not in the near future due to his soon to arrive baby. This is worrying as Presser (2004) highlights shift work being related to greater marital disagreements and child related problems than work schedules that involve weekends and holidays. Participant H is not in this situation yet but has already highlighted this as a forthcoming issue.

Another negative trend that was noticed in the interviews was the participants speaking about sending time catching up on sleep, their energy levels and recuperating instead of enjoying their free time. This could be as a result of the long hours and shift work that has already been mentioned. Participant I speaks in her interview of knock on effects in terms of hours when speaking about kitchen porters. The results from the interviews show that 45% of the participants speak of being physically drained from working with one participant saying she felt like she lived in her uniform. A very worry result from the interviews is that 18% of the participants feel mentally and physically drained from their work with another participant stating that the job made him feel miserable. This mental and physical strain can be out down to many factors such as hours and the stress associated with the job. O'Neill & Xiao (2010), Cleveland et al (2007) and Buick & Thomas (2001) are all authors who highlight the issues of burnout and work related stress as a major cause for concern for work-life balance in the hospitality industry. Cleveland et al (2007) notes that due to the stress and burnout workers in the hospitality industry are seeking employment in other sectors. This is supported by participant's B and C who both state their intentions of finding work in another sector.

While these are all negative trends associated with work-life balance of the overall sample 45% felt as though they enjoyed a good work-life balance at the moment. It is important to note however that two of these participants, G and I, are in management positions and are in control of the hours they work, which has already noted it as major trend in these results. Of this 45% another two participants, F and K, work straight hours with no shift work involved which again is another major trait of the research.

A final insight into the work-life balance that exists from the view of the workers themselves is the lack of opportunities made available to them in terms of work-life balance. 82% of the participants stated that their organisation did not offer them with

the opportunity to develop a positive work-life balance. Of this 82% five participants stated that it was from a lack of managerial interest, support and a complete lack of sympathy towards employee problems and issues. This is highlighted by Rodriguez & Gregory (2005) who claimed that hospitality employers were not willing to invest in their employees. Unfortunately for the employers this has made retaining employees quite hard as Karatepe & Kilic (2007) state that due to the working life these employees maintain there is high employee turnover. Likewise, Rodriguez & Gregory state that employees see this lack of investment as there being no realistic future for them in the industry. This is noted in the interviews by participant C who viewed his employment in the industry as a way to gain experience and as a stepping stone to better things outside of hospitality.

As you can see from these results and comparison to the literature there are massive similarities between the results of this investigation and the literature. Of the negative impacts on work-life balance stated by different authors, such as long and unsociable hours, shift work, stress, burnout and a lack of investment from management and employers, all of these were mentioned in the interviews by the participants.

6.2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 2

The second objective in this dissertation aimed to evaluate how work-life balance changed in hospitality as an employee progressed up the management structure. This is vital in ascertaining what kind of work-life balance exists for workers in the industry as management are workers along with the ground level employees. For this objective there were only three participants in a higher level of management. When asked if they did have a better work-life balance now because of their higher position one stated that he didn't, one stated that she did while the other claimed that he has given up an opportunity of having a work-life balance in order to progress his career. According to Connolly & McGing (2006) managers need to meet the needs of their employees in order to achieve a successful business. Adding further to that point Kelley-Patterson and George (2001) found that this is not the case as employees were finding it hard to balance work-life and home-life due to managerial demands. In our results it is clear that participant G who is a general manager is willing to give up his work-life balance in favour of work. What needs to be noted

from this is that participant's G and I have control over the hours they work which is a major trait in negative work-life balance in the industry.

What is interesting is this stance from a manager. We see clearly from the interview of participant G that he places very little importance to his employee's work-life balance as he offers them what he was offered as he progressed through the industry. This proves that the report conducted by Rodrigues & Gregory (2005). This report resulted in the authors concluding that management in the hospitality industry were not offering their employees the opportunities to have a positive work-life balance. This makes us question if managers do offer their employees the chance to further their work-life balance. When questioned about this participant I stated that he didn't as he was under financial constraints and couldn't afford the extra expenses. Likewise, participant G claimed that the reward did not equal the cost. This is a clear indication that De Cieri et al (2005) was correct in saying that company culture and managerial culture were two big challenges in implementing work-life balance.

6.3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 3

Research objective 3 aims to analyse the difference in work life balance in terms of age. Ghiselli & Zhao (2016) concluded that work-life balance became more important with age as people developed larger family and home commitments. Roberts (2005) has a different perspective in that he claimed work-life balance was more important to younger people who valued their lifestyles more than older people. The sample of the interviews was split into four different age categories as detailed on the following page:

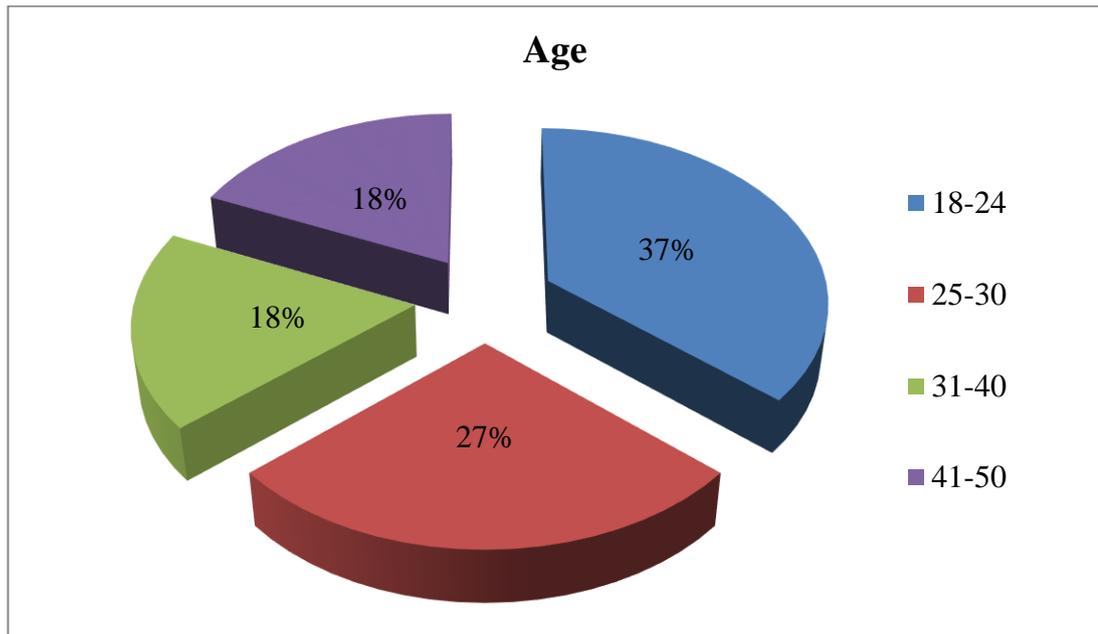


Figure 6.3-1: Age Demographic

If we are to look at the differences in answer depending on age an interesting trend appears. It is not so much that the value of work-life balance changes with age but rather the motivator for work-life balance. In regards to the participants valuing work-life balance all participants value their life away from work with the exception of participant G who is extremely career driven and works his ideal balance in spending more time in work. For the remainder of the participants the development of motivators is very interesting. For the age category 18-24 the main reasons for valuing free time was the social and sporting opportunities made available to them. As we move to the 25-30 category spending time with loved ones becomes more important with sport still being mentioned. In the 31-40 categories these motivators change again with spending time with family and partner becoming more important. Finally, with the 41-50 category family is the driving force behind valuing a positive work-life balance. In a way these results prove and question others. In the case of Ghiselli & Zhao (2016) these results prove that with age comes a greater family responsibility and need to be involved in home life. With Roberts (2005) these results that the younger generation do value their lifestyle. The main aspect to take away here though is that the value of work-life balance did not change depending on age.

6.4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 4

Due to the report compiled by the Sherry Fitzgerald Group (2014) it has become evident that all departments in a hotel are not only profitable but essential to the overall success of a hotel in Ireland. In response to this it became clear that each department in a hotel should be investigated if possible. In response to this the sample contained a vast array of workers from different departments as shown below.

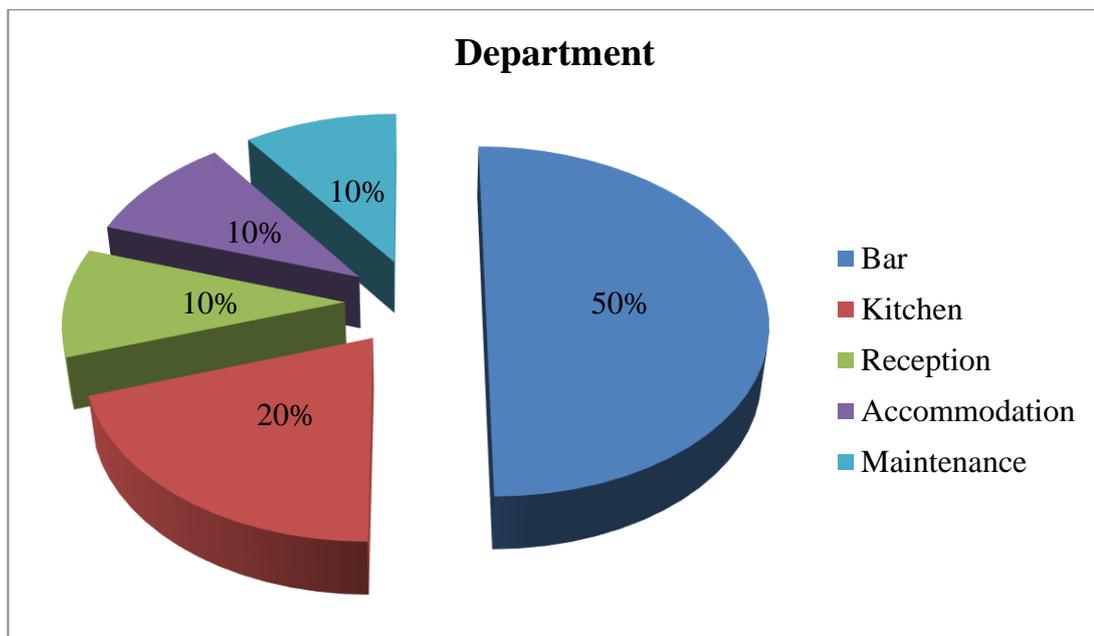


Figure 6.4-1: Department Demographic

As you can see there were participants from the bar, kitchen, maintenance, management, reception and accommodation in this research process. It stated earlier in the dissertation that there is a noticeable gap in the research as far as work-life balance by department goes with most authors focusing on one specific department or the organisation as a whole. The results from this research are quite clear though. Of the participants from the bar 100% identified a department of long, unsocial hours, physical and mental burnout and a lack of management support and sympathy. A lack of communication between management and staff was also highlighted. For the remainder of the departments work-life balance was deemed adequate and ideal in terms of the maintenance department. It is clear to see that

there is a big difference between the bar and kitchen and all the other departments in terms of hours and burnout. Stress is a trend that is witnessed in all departments except reception and maintenance. Even though these trends are witnessed in different departments the participants were capable of highlighting good aspects of these departments in terms of work-life balance as well unlike the bar. In the bar there seems to be a major problem as far as work-life balance is concerned.

6.5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 5

Interestingly this research objective was discussed in research objective 3 in terms of what an employee values their work-life balance for. While stating the aim for these objective differences in gender and origin were stated as possible factors that could influence motivators for work-life balance. We have witnessed in the discussion that age is one factor that does influence a person's motivator with the younger generation valuing lifestyle and the older generation valuing family. In terms of origin, unfortunately the sample does not contain different origins of people so it proved impossible to prove that theory. We do however have a difference in genders as detailed below:

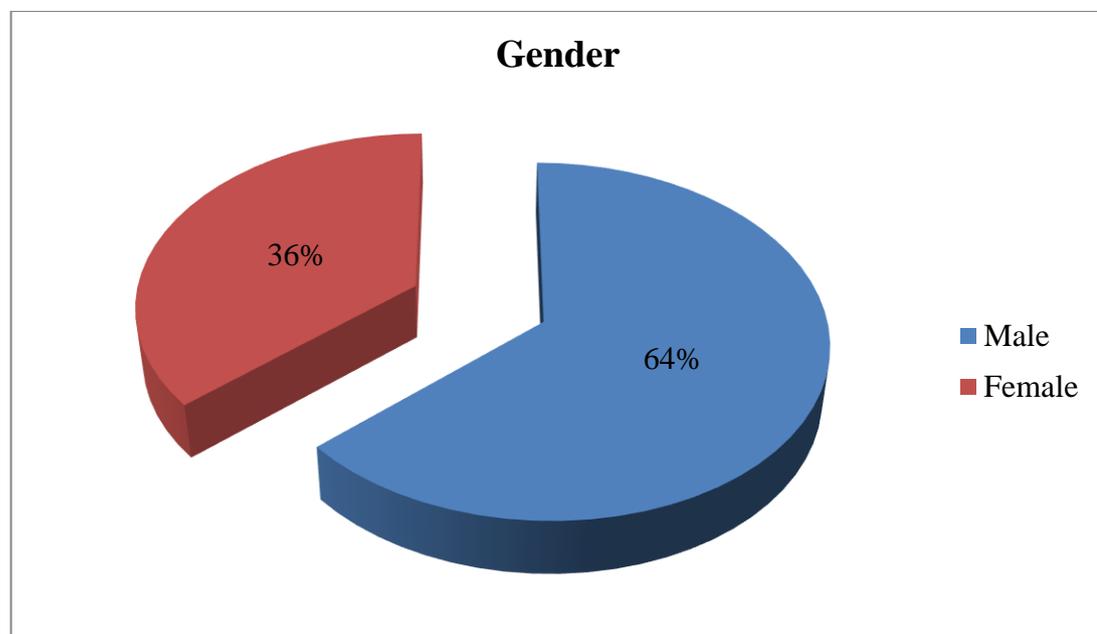


Figure 6.5-1: Gender Demographic

Unfortunately, this sample is skewed in favour of the male gender but that has not seemed to influence the results. The female participants gave answers that had very little variance from their male counterparts. It seems as though the same issues such as hours, stress and managerial support are issues for all genders. Likewise, there were participants from both genders who viewed their current work-life balance as adequate. This is quite interesting as Ghiselli & Zhao (2016) found that the female gender has greater barriers to career progression because of work-life balance but this doesn't seem to be the case as participant I is the head chef in her kitchen and at the top level of management in her hotel. Participant I mentions her family commitments but states that this is not a problem for her.

6.6. CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to discuss the findings of the investigation and compare these to relevant literature in order to gain a clear understanding in terms of the Irish hospitality industry. This was organised by research objective in order to gain a clear understanding of the information related to that objective. This is essential to make informed and proper conclusions to the research objectives.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. CONCLUSIONS

This investigation has focused on work-life balance within the Irish hospitality sector. This sector is of vital importance to the Irish economy and the culture of the Irish people. As a nation we have always been regarded as warm and welcoming. This is evident in our hospitality industry and it is confirmed by the success that it has had over the years. Central to this success is the employees that work in the industry. As stated in the introduction to this dissertation human capital is fast becoming the most vital resource an organisation has at its disposal. In light of this the topic of work-life balance comes to the fore. Work-life balance has many definitions that were examined and discussed in the previous chapters. This study was ‘An Investigation into the Work-Life Balance that Exists for Workers in the Irish Hospitality Industry’. This was the main research objective of this dissertation. After careful examination of the relevant literature five research objectives were identified in order to answer this question.

7.1.1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 1

What are the hospitality industry’s employee’s perceptions of work-life balance in the Irish hospitality industry?

During the discussion chapter it was highlighted that the results of this investigation proved all of the literature right in terms of long unsociable hours, shift work, burnout and stress. In terms of this sample the conclusion is clear that the employee’s perceptions of work-life balance in the Irish hospitality industry are negative.

7.1.2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 2

What is the difference between levels of management from bottom level employees to senior management in terms of work-life balance and the effectiveness of work-life balance as a tool for management?

Of the three participants who had the position to answer this question the results are clear that in the front of house as regards head barman and general manager the work-life balance proceeds to become worse. In the case of the head chef it has actually improved because of the systems she has put in place. Overall in the hospitality industry it has to be concluded that your work-life balance has the potential to improve, with advancement to the highest level of management, if one wishes it to.

It is clear from the results that work-life balance is a tool that can be used to motivate employees. This investigation proves it is company culture through strategies as a cost reduction and managerial culture that is the biggest challenge to implementing work-life balance policies in the Irish hospitality industry. Therefore, a conclusion can be made. Yes, it is possible for management to use work-life balance policies as a tool for management if the challenges associated with that implementation are overcome.

7.1.3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 3

Is there a difference in work-life balance between different age groups?

With this investigation a very interesting conclusion can be made. Work-Life balance is viewed as important to all age groups and it is the motivator that changes with age. This is clear to see from the shift of value from having a social life to spending time with family.

7.1.4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 4

Is there a difference in work-life balance between different departments in the hospitality industry?

I believe this is where this investigation brought about a new conclusion for the study of work-life balance in the hospitality industry, internationally and in Ireland. Hospitality as rightly pointed out by multitudes of authors has a bad reputation for workers and the conditions they work in. This investigation proves that this is not true for all the departments in a hospitality organisation. It is clear that the work-life balance of employees varies depending on the department they work in. From this

investigation we can make the conclusion that work-life balance in the hospitality can be varied depending on the department that is being worked in.

7.1.5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 5

What are the motivators that affect employee's perceptions of work-life balance?

With this objective the main aim was to see if factors such as age and gender influence a worker's perception of work-life balance. It was found in this study that gender does not have a major influence in perceptions of work-life balance but age does. We witnessed that what motivates a workers need for work-life balance changes over time from the need of socialising to the need to spend time with family.

7.1.6. FURTHER RESEARCH

There are some shortcomings in this investigation, the first being with the sample. The sample as pointed out in text is highly skewed to the bar department of a hotel and the male gender. This resulted in the information being slightly influenced by the perceptions, thoughts and beliefs of the participants from the bar. In terms of research tool, I do believe that interviews are the best way to approach this topic as they allow the interviewee to speak freely about the topic. For future research maybe a survey could be used in conjunction with an interview process just to get some extra data.

At the outset of this dissertation it became clear that there was a lack of research into work-life balance in the Irish hospitality industry. Through this investigation I believe that work-life balance theory in terms of the hospitality industry has been increased. Through the conclusions made above there are new insights into the difference between departments, the employees perspective, what influences motivators and managements attitude towards work-life balance. I believe in terms of future research this investigation is highly valuable to academics and management in the hospitality industry both in Ireland and abroad. Of all the conclusions that have been made in this investigation I believe the one that warrants the most attention is the difference in work-life balance between departments. Why can't one department mirror the other in terms of work-life balance?

7.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

From this investigation there are a number of recommendations that can be made for the change, enhancement and improvement of current work-life balance policies in the Irish hospitality industry.

7.2.1. COMMUNICATION

As noted by Kozjek et al (2014) communication is a major challenge to implementing work-life balance policies. Through this investigation it has become clear that there is a lack of communication between departments and up and down the chain of command. It is recommended that management focus on improving communication between departments and towards their employees. Employees are likewise recommended to communicate with their management team. This should result in a clear reduction in stress levels in all departments.

In implementing these recommendations it is clear that there would be a long-term time frame in mind as you are changing how employees function in the workplace with is not a quick process. This recommendation would have very little financial cost to the organisation.

7.2.2. OPPORTUNITIES

It would be in the hospitality sectors own interest to offer current workers opportunities to further themselves academically and in practice. From this investigation it was clear that some workers felt there was no future in the industry. In order for the industry to continue in terms of growth and service levels it is essential to invest in the human capital.

This as with the previous recommendation would be a long-term plan however this would involve a major financial expense. The rewards would be witnessed over the long-term however as the industry would have devoted employees with the skillsets needed to increase the success of the industry.

7.3. PERSONAL LEARNING STATEMENT

This project has been a great learning experience for me. It is definitely one of the most challenging activities I have ever undertaken. I am therefore extremely happy that I have completed it in such a tight time frame. Unfortunately, one of my many short comings is timing. If I was to conduct this research again I would attempt to do it over a longer time frame. This would allow me to gain a larger, more in depth look at work-life balance in hospitality but would also suit my style in terms of deadlines.

The project has provided me with a great insight into work-life balance and its meaning to people. In this way it has helped me to understand that all people view the world in a different way with different interpretations. The project has also given me a great insight into the hospitality industry in Ireland, its importance and difficulties. A major influence it has had on me is that even within the same organisation different departments may not be running as smoothly as you think. It is important therefore to be mindful of other people as you do not know the levels of stress or work levels they are dealing with.

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9. APPENDICES

9.1. APPENDIX 1 – STATEMENT FOR INTERVIEWEES

To all interviewees,

This statement clarifies some points which you may be feeling uncomfortable about and be looking for assurances about. The following are a list of guidelines that the interviewer has agreed to follow during the interview process and when writing up his findings in his dissertation:

- 1) This interview process is completely voluntary for all participants.
- 2) A participant has the right to leave a question unanswered if he/she feels the need to.
- 3) A participant has the right to leave the interview at any time.
- 4) The answers given in the interview will be anonymous and not passed back to any employer.
- 5) All private information such as names and contact details of participants will not be confidential and not be made available in the final dissertation.

The interviewer acknowledges that some of the questions in this interview may enter into an interviewee's private life and it is with this in mind that this statement was drawn up. The interviewer wishes to assure that all interviewees are comfortable in the interview in giving their honest opinions and this is why these guidelines have been written up and agreed to.

Peter Kennedy

9.2. APPENDIX 2 – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) Age?
- 2) Position within the hospitality industry?
- 3) Background in the hospitality industry?
- 4) Are you satisfied working in the hospitality industry?
- 5) What is your understanding of work-life balance?
- 6) What do you view as the ideal work-life balance for you?
- 7) How would you describe your current work-life balance?
- 8) Do you feel as you have moved up in your organisation that your work-life balance has improved?
- 9) Do you believe as you have progressed in your career your work-life balance has improved?
- 10) Do you believe the organisation you work for provides you with a platform to have a positive work-life balance?
- 11) In what ways do you think work-life balance could be improved in your department?
- 12) In what ways do you think work-life balance could be improved in your organisation?
- 13) Do you believe you as a manager provide your employees with the opportunity to have a positive work-life balance?
- 14) Are you happy with your life outside of work?
- 15) Does your home life negatively impact on your work-life balance?

9.3. APPENDIX 3 – INTERVIEW NOTES

9.3.1. PARTICIPANT A

What age are you?

19

What is your position within the hospitality industry?

Food and Beverage Assistant

What is your background within the hospitality industry?

This is my first job in the hotel trade but I have been doing it for the last three years. I was part-time when I was younger and still in school but since I finished my leaving cert I have been working fulltime as a food and beverage assistant.

Are you satisfied working within the hospitality industry?

When I was younger I would have said yes and I actually planned on doing some travelling and working within the industry internationally. As I have gotten older I realised that I actually don't like working in a hotel the way I used to. There just seems to be more pressure the more experience I get and more responsibility. Not that I have gotten a raise mind you. The way I feel about the job at the minute it really is making me question whether I need to try get into a college or try for a different trade or something. A really disappointing aspect of the industry for me and it's something that makes working really hard is the quality of management. They seem to view us as machines and not people at times. When we question them they just say that they had to do it when they were our age. Makes me want to get out of this industry.

What is your understanding of work-life balance?

Obviously I wouldn't be able to give you like proper definitions or anything but for me I don't want to spend my whole life working and look back thinking I've wasted it all. I understand that everybody needs to work to have good times and a happy life but you work to live. I think the living is more important than the working.

What do you view as the ideal work-life balance for you?

Honestly I'd love to work 9-5 with weekends off but that isn't really possible in this industry. Still I would love to have more sociable hours. I would see that as enough for the job I do. If I could go out the odd weekend and have a few drinks and never miss a football match I would be seriously happy.

How would you describe your current work-life balance?

Terrible at the minute. I'd say I'm working about 50 hours a week, my pay is minimum wage and like I said before management barely see us as people sometimes. All of it just makes me miserable at times and that crosses over to when I'm at home or on my days off. I'm tired and miserable most of the time.

Do you believe the organisation you work for provides you with the platform to have a positive work-life balance?

No like I said before they really don't seem to care about our lives outside of work just that we get the job done.

In what ways do you think work-life balance could be improved in your department?

I feel like if we had a better management team things would get better. It would help my mood outside of work anyway. Other than that a system where we could seek days off in advance and most be given out to for wanting a day off would be nice.

In what ways do you think work-life balance could be improved in your organisation?

I'm in the bar and can only really speak about my own experiences but again a change in how the management think would probably be for the best.

Are you happy with your life outside of work?

Yeah I'm really happy outside of work in terms of my friends, family and my girlfriend. It's just how work makes me feel exhausted at times even on my days off.

Does your home life negatively impact on your work-life balance?

9.3.2. PARTICIPANT B

What age are you?

20

What is your position within the hospitality industry?

Food and Beverage Assistant

What is your background within the hospitality industry?

This is my first job in a hotel and I'm working in it for about a year and a half.

Are you satisfied working within the hospitality industry?

No not at all I work long hours with a lot of overtime. I don't like the pressure of it all either. Where I work there are loads of customers every day and the place is always packed. It just makes for a lot of stress which I'm not a fan of. The part that really gets me is that I don't get to socialise as much as I used to. I was always the one in my group of friends up for a night out but I miss most of them now and that because of work. I don't see this as long-term. I'm actually looking for a job in a different field at the minute.

What is your understanding of work-life balance?

I'm a big believer in mental health as I've seen what happens if you don't look after yourself. Because of that I know the importance of working for your health and not just money but the two should be equally balanced. One shouldn't take over the other in my opinion.

What do you view as the ideal work-life balance for you?

I want a 9-5 Monday to Friday job with weekends off. I can't get that in this industry so I'm trying to get out of it. I would also like to get more than minimum wage in my next job. I feel like it would enhance my lifestyle.

How would you describe your current work-life balance?

It's terrible. Like I already said I work long hours, unsociable hours and the shift work is horrible especially when I have to work a split. At the minute work leaves me feeling tired both mentally and physically and I feel like I live in my uniform.

Do you believe the organisation you work for provides you with the platform to have a positive work-life balance?

No they really don't. There is no organisation since my last manager left a month ago. Back then things were so much better. I enjoyed coming to work. He moved on though and the place is a shambles now. Like I said there's no organisation with the current management. I'm expected to work to a higher standard than my wage level. No respect from my manager. I feel like a number and I'm always expected to put work first.

In what ways do you think work-life balance could be improved in your department?

Fewer hours or more flexible hours, better pay and a new management team.

In what ways do you think work-life balance could be improved in your organisation?

If they hired more staff I think everybody wouldn't be as stressed out.

Are you happy with your life outside of work?

I am and that the thing I just got into a relationship and my family are great but because I'm stressed from work I often end up arguing with my boyfriend or my sisters or my mam. It's not right.

Does your home life negatively impact on your work-life balance?

No never.

9.3.3. PARTICIPANT C

What age are you?

24

What is your position within the hospitality industry?

Food and Beverage Assistant

What is your background within the hospitality industry?

This is my second job in the industry. I was a barman for two years previously.

Are you satisfied working within the hospitality industry?

No I don't like working in the hospitality industry at all and as far as I'm concerned it's a means to an end. I used the position to keep me going throughout college and the face to face customer experience is great for my C.V. I see the job as a stepping stone.

What is your understanding of work-life balance?

Getting the correct balance between work and personal life. In my opinion both are important and a good life in one leads to a good life in the other. You need a balance to be happy.

What do you view as the ideal work-life balance for you?

Sufficient time to relax and spend time with loved ones and not constantly working long unsocial hours. That would be ideal for me. It's all about being able to spend time with the people who make you happy.

How would you describe your current work-life balance?

Working unsocial hour's results in a bad work life balance. I have no routine with shift work and my hours cause me to become tired and fatigued which affects my performance in work. The fatigue has started to affect me when playing sports which are a massive part of my life.

Do you believe the organisation you work for provides you with the platform to have a positive work-life balance?

No the company that I work for doesn't seem to care about me at all. Due to my lack of experience in another area I have no other options other than the hospitality industry. The industry as a whole seems to neglect their employees as I have had this problem in both of my jobs as a barman.

In what ways do you think work-life balance could be improved in your department?

Consistent shifts and more staff that takes pressure off full time workers. The stress in this job is huge due to the high levels of customers that pass through every day and extra staff would make everyone's lives a lot easier.

In what ways do you think work-life balance could be improved in your organisation?

I'd say the same as the department. More staff and possibly getting a weekend off every now and again.

Are you happy with your life outside of work?

At the minute no because I never get to see my girlfriend due to the unsocial hours I work and the fatigue I experience because of it.

Does your home life negatively impact on your work-life balance?

No my work-life negatively impacts on my home life.

9.3.4. PARTICIPANT D

What age are you?

30

What is your position within the hospitality industry?

Head Barman

What is your background within the hospitality industry?

I have worked for three years in hospitality before I got this job and I've been doing this for about a year now. I started out as a bar back and worked my way up to being a barman and waiter and now I'm head barman in this job.

Are you satisfied working within the hospitality industry?

No not really. Like I don't mind the work. I actually like being kept busy and this job suits me in that sense but the long and late hours with the stress levels involved makes it a hard industry to work in.

What is your understanding of work-life balance?

In my mind work-life balance is about having a serious professional career that you put your all into when you are in the work-place but once the working day finishes you have an equal amount of time for your personal life.

What do you view as the ideal work-life balance for you?

I believe if the time for my personal life was equal to my working time that this is the ideal balance.

How would you describe your current work-life balance?

My life is heavily work orientated. I don't get much time for my personal life and what time I do get I generally spend recuperating from work. Like at the minute with the shift work and the overtime I need my days off just to recover.

Do you feel as you have moved up in your organisation that your work-life balance has improved?

No I feel as if the opposite has happened. I'm doing more hours and the stress has increased. I feel like since I have taken the promotion I have lost even more of my personal life.

Do you believe the organisation you work for provides you with the platform to have a positive work-life balance?

No not at all. I try to help the others around me because they are frustrated with the current situation and I do have that seniority over them but really the management is uninterested. As long as you get the work done they don't care about your personal life or how the job is affecting you as a person.

In what ways do you think work-life balance could be improved in your department?

I believe if the management organised the staff better than people would be a lot happier. Like it would definitely reduce their stress levels. Better communication

would be a great help as well. Maybe the management are having it as tough as we are but we don't know because there's no communication.

In what ways do you think work-life balance could be improved in your organisation?

I believe if the organisation hired more staff across all departments then work-life balance would be improved for everyone.

Are you happy with your life outside of work?

It's difficult to say to be honest. My family are great and I'm in a happy relationship but because of work I don't get to spend enough quality time with them. I'd say because of work I'm not happy with my life outside of work.

Does your home life negatively impact on your work-life balance?

No not so far anyway.

9.3.5. PARTICIPANT E

What age are you?

21

What is your position within the hospitality industry?

Food and Beverage Assistant

What is your background within the hospitality industry?

This is my first job but I've been working in it for a long time, since I was 17. I started when I was in school and now I'm doing it full time.

Are you satisfied working within the hospitality industry?

No not really its boring repetitive work and it really doesn't challenge me that much. I find that the times I work at are really unhealthy as well. I work until four o'clock in the morning some nights when there is a function on and I would be back in at 11 or 12 the next day. Nah it's not the job for me anymore.

What is your understanding of work-life balance?

I believe that somebody should have time to pursue their own interests. I work to live I shouldn't have to live to work. I think that's madness.

What do you view as the ideal work-life balance for you?

I think that you should be able to work sociable hours like 9-5 with weekends off. Obviously that's hard in this industry but it would be the ideal way of balancing my work and life.

How would you describe your current work-life balance?

I'd say it's very bad at the minute. I feel like I have no time outside of work for what I want to do. I spend most of my spare time catching up on sleep or just too tired to do anything over exertive. I used to play a lot of sport but due to the hours of this job along with the energy it takes to do this kind of job I don't actually play any sports now.

Do you believe the organisation you work for provides you with the platform to have a positive work-life balance?

Absolutely not. I work long and late hours and I don't get too much time off between shifts. I rarely even get two days off in a row. Like I'd have a Monday and a Friday off. What use is that to me really?

In what ways do you think work-life balance could be improved in your department?

If they hired more staff it would make everything better. It would reduce stress levels and maybe open up the roster to having more time off. I think it would benefit all of us in the department if we got the odd weekend off. I can't remember the last one I had off. I'd love to be able to finish on time with no more overtime but I can't see that happening.

In what ways do you think work-life balance could be improved in your organisation?

The organisation would benefit greatly if the departments worked together a little bit more. I feel it's unfair for a receptionist to say I will serve food at a later time than usual and then they go home and I have to stay late. So yeah that would help along with some managerial support. I think the management could do with being a little bit sympathetic towards their employee's problems.

Are you happy with your life outside of work?

Not really but it's because of work that I'm unhappy. I don't have a life outside of work because of it.

Does your home life negatively impact on your work-life balance?

No my family and friends are supportive and understanding of my current position.

9.3.6. PARTICIPANT F

What age are you?

29

What is your position within the hospitality industry?

Maintenance Operative

What is your background within the hospitality industry?

This is my second job in the industry. I was a waiter before I took this job.

Are you satisfied working within the hospitality industry?

In the job I'm in at the minute I'm very happy but when I was a waiter I wasn't happy at all.

What is your understanding of work-life balance?

You have to work. There's no two ways about it. I wouldn't be able to live the life I do if I didn't work. It provides me with the lifestyle I have. I do value the lifestyle I have and see it as quite important.

What do you view as the ideal work-life balance for you?

The job I am in at the minute is ideal for me. I work 8-5 or 9-6 every day and the time is really up to me. The boss doesn't mind if I'm in at 8 or 9 as long as I do my hours and get the job done. I have weekends off as well which suits me perfectly.

How would you describe your current work-life balance?

Very good I have to say. I enjoy my work and the lifestyle I live outside of here.

Do you believe the organisation you work for provides you with the platform to have a positive work-life balance?

Yes, they do. The hours and time off suit me and like I said the work is quite enjoyable.

In what ways do you think work-life balance could be improved in your department?

I'd like to see them introduce flexitime but other than that I honestly can't think of much because I am so happy.

In what ways do you think work-life balance could be improved in your organisation?

As far as I can see its fine. I hear a lot of people giving out about it the whole time but they need to realise that they are lucky to have a job and to get on with it. There's lots of people out there who would love to be in their position.

Are you happy with your life outside of work?

Very happy I have a great life.

Does your home life negatively impact on your work-life balance?

Not at all.

9.3.7. PARTICIPANT G

What age are you?

32

What is your position within the hospitality industry?

General Manager

What is your background within the hospitality industry?

I started out as a bar back when I was younger and still in school. I moved up and became a barman, then a head barman, bar supervisor, junior hotel manager, duty manager, food and beverage manager and now I'm the general manager. I never went to college for hotel management but rather treated my time in the different jobs as an apprenticeship.

Are you satisfied working within the hospitality industry?

I love working in this industry. I always loved working with people and being kept busy and this is the perfect industry for me to do that. I have worked hard and put in the hours to be where I am today. I have achieved this job at a young age and that is something I am very proud of.

What is your understanding of work-life balance?

I believe that work-life balance is all about how you try to balance being happy in both aspects of your life.

What do you view as the ideal work-life balance for you?

I'd love to have weekends off which even though I am the general manager isn't possible in the hotel I currently work at. In time I will achieve this when I move on to a bigger hotel.

How would you describe your current work-life balance?

At the moment I work a lot of hours and at the weekends but it's something that I have grown up with and I am used to now. In this industry you get out what you put in. I have worked long and difficult hours all my life and I still do. This is how you achieve in the hospitality industry. As far as my current work-life balance I am happy because I have never known any different.

Do you believe the organisation you work for provides you with the platform to have a positive work-life balance?

I believe that this organisation provides me with the same platform as all the others I have worked for. I could have argued for more time off or for a better holiday package but I wouldn't be where I am today if I had done that.

Do you believe as you have progressed in your career your work-life balance has improved?

No I wouldn't say that. As I progressed through the different levels of management I realised that if I worked hard then I could achieve even more. I sacrificed having a brilliant work-life balance to achieve that and was happy to do so.

In what ways do you think work-life balance could be improved in your organisation?

I believe that if we hired more staff we could improve the balance of the employees we already have but the cost wouldn't be worth the reward in my mind. I have done the hours and stress that the employees are doing at the minute and more. They really don't realise that this is life and they are lucky to have jobs.

Do you believe you as a manager provide your employees with the opportunity to have a positive work-life balance?

I believe I provide them with the same opportunities that I was afforded as I progressed through the industry.

Are you happy with your life outside of work?

At the minute I spend a lot of my time in work but I am not in a relationship so this makes it easier. Like I said before I want to progress in my career and that's what's important to me so yes I am happy.

Does your home life negatively impact on your work-life balance?

No not really.

9.3.8. PARTICIPANT H

What age are you?

45

What is your position within the hospitality industry?

Kitchen Porter

What is your background within the hospitality industry?

This is my first time working in a kitchen. I've done loads of other odd jobs over the years in different countries and all but this is my first in a hotel.

Are you satisfied working within the hospitality industry?

The hours are long and hard but I prefer working and being busy so it suits me. It's a lot better than some other jobs I've done so I can't complain.

What is your understanding of work-life balance?

Well I have always enjoyed my life but worked hard at the same time so I can't see why you can't have the best of both worlds.

What do you view as the ideal work-life balance for you?

Well I work a lot of split shifts at the minute. I'm in at 10 and work for a few hours. Then I go off for a good portion of the day and I go back to close up. I'd prefer to have a straight shift so that would be ideal for me.

How would you describe your current work-life balance?

It's grand. I spend a lot of time in work but I get home during the day because of my split shift to see my partner who's pregnant so at the minute I'm in a good situation.

Do you believe the organisation you work for provides you with the platform to have a positive work-life balance?

I would say that it's not as good as other places I've worked. Other jobs might not be as nice as this one but they are straight shifts at the same time every day and with the weekend off, you can't get that in this job. They don't seem overly concerned about the staff welfare here though.

In what ways do you think work-life balance could be improved in your department?

Well I work long hard hours and so does everyone else in the kitchen, even the chefs. A few more hands around the place would make work-life a lot easier and maybe that would help outside of work as well.

In what ways do you think work-life balance could be improved in your organisation?

Well I know from listening to other people that they aren't happy with the management but I come under the head chef's authority and he laid out what this job was from the start so I can't complain. Other than that I couldn't really speak of anything outside of the kitchen.

Are you happy with your life outside of work?

Like I said me and my partner are expecting a child soon so I'm loving life at the minute. I am concerned about how much I will miss of my child's life if I say in this job though.

Does your home life negatively impact on your work-life balance?

Not really I don't think. It's not something I've ever noticed anyway.

9.3.9. PARTICIPANT I

What age are you?

50

What is your position within the hospitality industry?

Head Chef

What is your background within the hospitality industry?

I've worked in hospitality my whole life since leaving culinary school. All my jobs were in the kitchen working my way up from the bottom all the way to the top job now.

Are you satisfied working within the hospitality industry?

Yeah I love what I do. I am very passionate about it and I wouldn't do anything other than this.

What is your understanding of work-life balance?

I believe that work and life are important in equal measure. You can't be in work the whole time. You need to enjoy your life and spend time with your family.

What do you view as the ideal work-life balance for you?

I have the ideal balance at the moment. I take one weekend off a month and I make sure I see my husband and kids at every available opportunity. It helps that I do my own roster though.

How would you describe your current work-life balance?

Like I already said its ideal what I have at the minute. You are told about this life before you ever even start. We work in a difficult environment and we do long unsociable hours but this is what we signed up for and we make sure everybody knows that before they ever start in this job.

Do you believe the organisation you work for provides you with the platform to have a positive work-life balance?

In this organisation I would say no. We are very tight on expenses and because of that I can't hire an extra few hands to help out. The kitchen porters have it the worst hours wise but in terms of stress the chefs are in a class of their own.

Do you believe as you have progressed in your career your work-life balance has improved?

Yes, it definitely has. All the way up it was hard and tough but since I became head chef I actually find it easier to see my kids and husband. The only reason this has happened is because there is a clear authority structure in place and I have surrounded myself with some great people. This allows me to be confident when I take time off that things will run smoothly.

Do you believe you as a manager provide your employees with the opportunity to have a positive work-life balance?

No I really don't. As far as the chef's go they thrive in this atmosphere and they love it. It's the kitchen porters I really feel sorry for. They work a tough and dirty job but like I said expenses are tight.

In what ways do you think work-life balance could be improved in your department?

Hiring more staff would be brilliant for everybody and might reduce the stress and burnout factors that go with the job.

In what ways do you think work-life balance could be improved in your organisation?

Communication between the departments is not great. We have had trouble with reception a lot in that they promise customers all of these wonderful things and leave us with having to do them. I had a chef stay two hours late the other night to cook dinner for two people because reception promised them. The receptionist went on home on time while my lad done another few hours' overtime. So communication would be a big problem.

Are you happy with your life outside of work?

I love my life outside of work.

Does your home life negatively impact on your work-life balance?

No not at all my family always support me.

9.3.10. PARTICIPANT J

What age are you?

27

What is your position within the hospitality industry?

Receptionist

What is your background within the hospitality industry?

This is my second job in the industry. I was a waitress when I was younger.

Are you satisfied working within the hospitality industry?

At the minute I am. I work no more than 40 hours a week, I'm happy with my pay grade and the reception desk is a little bit more relaxed than the rest of the hotel.

What is your understanding of work-life balance?

Work-life balance is about finding that point where you are equally satisfied in your work-life and your home-life.

What do you view as the ideal work-life balance for you?

I would love to have weekends off. In this industry that is hard but I do get one off a month but I'd love more. I am looking at secretarial positions in companies that operate Monday to Friday at the minute to achieve that goal.

How would you describe your current work-life balance?

At the moment it is difficult at times. I am not stressed thank god and I find my job quite easy but the hours don't suit my lifestyle sometimes. I do two or three late shifts a week which I'm not happy with. I would prefer a standard 9-5 shift every day.

Do you believe the organisation you work for provides you with the platform to have a positive work-life balance?

For me I believe they do try. My immediate manager makes sure we get one weekend off a month which is incredible in this industry but the industry itself makes it very hard to have a positive work-life balance. Unfortunately, people avail of hotel at unsociable hours such as weekends and evenings.

In what ways do you think work-life balance could be improved in your department?

I think my manager has a good grasp on our department. The shifts are split equally and everything is fair and equal so I have no complaints.

In what ways do you think work-life balance could be improved in your organisation?

I think if they hired some more staff down in the bar, kitchen and accommodation then they would really reduce the stress levels down there. Things are so intense sometimes that there are disagreements that can get heated at times.

Are you happy with your life outside of work?

Yes I am I have to say.

Does your home life negatively impact on your work-life balance?

No it never has thankfully.

9.3.11. PARTICIPANT K

What age are you?

38

What is your position within the hospitality industry?

Accommodation Assistant

What is your background within the hospitality industry?

This is my first job but I've been doing it for four years now.

Are you satisfied working within the hospitality industry?

Yes, I am. The money is good and I like the hours I work. Not much to give out about after that.

What is your understanding of work-life balance?

Well it's about work and life being equal to each other. I'm a firm believer that you work to live and you don't live to work.

What do you view as the ideal work-life balance for you?

Monday to Friday with the hours I do now 8-5 would be ideal for me.

How would you describe your current work-life balance?

It's really good. I finish up at five every day and don't have to do too much overtime like some of the others who work here. Finishing at 5 means I get home around the same time as my husband which is just perfect and all I could ask for really.

Do you believe the organisation you work for provides you with the platform to have a positive work-life balance?

Yes, up here in accommodation it's quite good. We work the same hours every day and get two days off in a row so they do help us out. We have to work weekends but that's not the hotels fault. That's the industry we work in.

In what ways do you think work-life balance could be improved in your department?

One or two extra hands would be nice. We have about 30 minutes to turn over a room and clean it top to bottom which is difficult and stressful at times so an extra pair of hand would be wonderful.

In what ways do you think work-life balance could be improved in your organisation?

From my point of view in accommodation everyone is lovely but they are always stressing out in the bar and kitchen so maybe they could introduce something down there to help them out.

Are you happy with your life outside of work?

Yes, me and my husband lead a very happy life.

Does your home life negatively impact on your work-life balance?

No not at all.