The Impact of Maintaining a Healthy Balance Between Work and Personal Life on Hotel Employees' Performance in Rwanda. A Case Study of Olympic Hotel.

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ABSTRACT : This study investigates the impact of maintaining a healthy balance between work and personal life on hotel employees' performance in Rwanda, focusing on Hotel Olympic. The research is guided by three objectives: to identify the nature of balancing work and personal life at Olympic Hotel, to identify the challenges affecting the effective balance between work and personal life, and to propose solutions to these challenges. Utilising a descriptive research survey design, data was collected from 40 employees through structured questionnaires to identify the nature of work-life balance, challenges, and proposed solutions. The demographic profile of respondents revealed a diverse workforce, with a slight majority of females (51.72%), most respondents were singles 57.5% and ages predominantly between 31-40 years (45%). Educational backgrounds varied, with secondary education being the most common (43%), and experience levels ranging primarily from 6-10 years (43%). Findings on the nature of balancing work and personal life highlighted challenges such as high-stress levels, work interference with personal life, and tight work schedules. Findings on challenges affecting the effective balance between work and personal life highlighted a demanding business environment, tight work schedules, and limited work-life balance options mainly available to parents and caregivers. Flexible working options seen as restrictive, and lack of support for education or training opportunities, insufficient time off, difficulty accessing support programs for stress or personal issues, and unclear expectations about working hours. Proposed solutions emphasised improved compensation, greater flexibility in working arrangements, and extending work-life balance options to all employees. Recommendations include implementing flexible work arrangements, clear communication about policies, and regular feedback sessions. By fostering a supportive work environment and prioritizing employee well-being, Olympic Hotel can enhance organizational performance and employee satisfaction. Further research is suggested to explore work-life balance across industries and geographical contexts, informing more inclusive organizational strategies.

KEYWORDS: *Work-life balance, employee performance, flexible work arrangements,employee well-being, organizational performance.*

1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The concept of maintaining a healthy balance between work and personal life (work life balance) gained significant attention in the early 20th century, particularly in the USA and Europe, driven by the recognition that workers, especially young mothers, struggled to manage both their family responsibilities and their careers effectively. Notable early efforts to address this issue include the introduction of flexible working arrangements by the W.K. Kellogg Company in the United States between 1938 and 1945, resulting in shorter shifts and increased customer satisfaction (Hayman, 2010).

In Europe, the discourse on work-life balance in the hospitality industry reflects a diverse array of cultural and organizational practices. European countries like Sweden and Denmark often lead in promoting policies and initiatives that support work-life balance, with a strong emphasis on employee well-being and quality of life (Lagrosen&Lagrosen, 2017). These countries tend to adopt flexible working arrangements, generous parental leave policies, and a culture that values leisure time, contributing to higher levels of employee satisfaction and productivity (Dawson et al., 2018). However, in other European countries like Greece and Italy, traditional gender roles and societal norms may prevail, posing challenges, particularly for women in the hospitality workforce (Karamichas&Koutsopoulos, 2016). Despite variations across Europe, there is a growing recognition among hospitality organizations of the importance of fostering work-life balance to attract and retain talent in an increasingly competitive market (Lagrosen&Lagrosen, 2017).

In United State, research on work-life balance in hospitality industry reveals a landscape marked by demanding schedules and high job stress for workers (Beggs et al., 2019). Studies underscore challenges such as irregular shifts and weekend work requirements, contributing to difficulties in achieving a healthy balance between work and personal life (Lee & Oh, 2020). Proactive measures are being taken, including the implementation of flexible scheduling options and wellness programs, aimed at supporting employee well-being (Lee & Oh, 2020). There is a growing recognition among hospitality employers of the importance of work-life balance in attracting and retaining talent, leading to increased investment in initiatives that promote employee satisfaction and overall organizational performance (Kirk, 2018).

In Asia, further insights from the hospitality industry explore work-life balance dynamics in different cultural contexts, particularly in countries like India and Japan. In India, where the hospitality sector significantly contributes to the economy, studies have emphasized the importance of work-life balance in improving employee satisfaction and retention (Chand, 2019). Indian hospitality workers often prioritize a harmonious integration of work and personal life, given the cultural emphasis on family and personal relationships (Bhattacharya & Singh, 2018). In Japan, known for its strong work ethic, achieving work-life balance poses unique challenges due to long working hours and cultural expectations (Nakazawa & Sakurai, 2019). Despite challenges, there is a growing recognition among Japanese hospitality firms of the need to implement strategies such as flexible working arrangements to enhance work-life balance and mitigate the negative impact on employee health and job satisfaction (Nakazawa & Sakurai, 2019).

In Africa, the discussion surrounding work-life balance in the hospitality industry is shaped by a combination of cultural, economic, and organizational factors. Research on this topic is relatively limited compared to other regions, but emerging studies highlight both challenges and opportunities in achieving work-life balance for hospitality workers across the continent.

Research in South Africa emphasizes the importance of work-life balance initiatives in the hospitality sector, particularly in urban centers like Cape Town and Johannesburg (Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2015). Challenges such as long working hours and demanding schedules impact employee well-being (Raub & Robert, 2017). In Kenya, research explores work-life balance issues among hospitality workers, identifying factors such as irregular schedules and high workloads as barriers to achieving a healthy balance between work and personal life. Similarly, in Nigeria, research examines work-life balance practices in the hospitality industry, highlighting the need for organizations to implement policies that support employee well-being.

In Mauritius, a key tourism destination in Africa, studies indicate that long working hours and demanding schedules prevalent among hospitality workers impact their ability to achieve a healthy balance between work and personal life. Research underscores the importance of supportive organizational cultures and the implementation of work-life balance practices to address these challenges, positively influencing employee performance and job satisfaction (Ramluggun& Ishaq, 2020).

Rwanda is also witnessing developments in promoting work-life balance, with legal frameworks advocating for standard workweek hours and support facilities for working parents (UmubyeyiRuzagiriza, A., 2021; Taarifa Rwanda, 2023). However, challenges persist, especially in sectors like the hotel and tourism industry, where long working hours remain prevalent (The New Times, 2018).

Recent research in the hospitality sector highlights the importance of work-life balance in employee performance, retention and satisfaction. Studies show that hotels with supportive work-life balance policies experience higher levels of employee engagement and performance (Smith & Johnson, 2023). Initiatives such as flexible scheduling and remote work options positively impact employee well-being and productivity in the hospitality sector (Jones et al., 2022).

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Mabasa (2015) argues that managing a full-time job while balancing personal life is not always an easy task. Maintaining professional and personal life can be hectic at times (Mabasa, 2015). According to Machingauta (2011), employee engagement is critical to gaining a competitive advantage in a labor market where committed, skilled individuals are increasingly difficult to find and retain. Several factors impacting employee performance have been recognized, or at least speculated on (ibid). Maintaining a healthy balance between work and personal life (Work-life balance) is one such significant factor. Surridge (2014) highlights the need for companies to have happy, fit, and healthy employees to meet the growing challenges of the contemporary workplace. Many workers appear to be experiencing burnout due to increased stress and overwork. Kastner (2015) argues that this condition is evident in nearly all occupations, from blue-collar workers to upper management.

Over the past decade at Olympic Hotel, there has been a rise in workers' compensation claims, an increase in levels of absenteeism, workplace conflicts, and staff turnover. While these issues might not be caused by a single factor, a healthy balance between work and personal life could contribute to such problems. This is despite efforts by management to improve pay, fringe benefits, and general working conditions to capacitate workers.

Employees are the most important asset of an organization, capable of helping organizations achieve their mission and vision (Lazar &Osoian, 2010). The theory of work-life balance aims to provide supportive and healthy work surroundings that enable employees to balance their work and family tasks. A healthy balance between work and personal life is vital for overall satisfaction in life, family, and job, and it also helps reduce absenteeism and employee turnover (Carlson, Kacmar & Williams, 2016). As work demands increase, the issue of maintaining a healthy balance between work and personal life becomes more relevant. Many organizations fail to recognize the significance of the working environment for employee performance. Consequently, employees face work pressure and poor work-life balance, leading to dissatisfaction with their jobs and potentially poor performance.

Studies addressing the issue of a healthy balance between work and personal life and its impact on employees' job performance in the hospitality sector are rare. This study will focus on Olympic Hotel as a case study because the researcher has observed challenges and gaps related to maintaining a healthy balance between work and personal life at Olympic Hotel, as evidenced by performance issues raised in numerous meetings. This research intends to examine the impact of a healthy balance between work and personal life on employee performance.

III.   RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The general objective of the research was to examine the impact of a healthy balance between work and personal life on performance at Olympic Hotel. Specific objectives were:

(i) To identify the nature of balancing work and personal life at Olympic Hotel.
(ii) To identify the challenges affecting the effective balance between work and personal life at Olympic Hotel.
(iii) To propose possible solutions on the challenges affecting the effective balance between work and personal life.

IV.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Healthy balance between work and personal life studies (Work Life Balance) Theories

Specialists have been attempting to propose several theories to clarify the work family linkage and the different viewpoints of the relationship between work, personal and family life. There are two fundamental theories that study role conflicts and its effect on work life balance. These are Boundary theory and Border theory. There are also different theories that was clarified by experts and theories are built on the foundation of the following theories (Kumar and Janakiram, 2017).Hereunder are the different theories of work life balance.

Border Theory

Imagine your work and personal life as separate rooms. Border Theory, introduced by Desrochers et al. (2005), focuses on how flexible these "doors" are between the rooms. Flexible or permeable boundaries allow for integration, where experiences from one domain influence the other. This can be beneficial - maybe you use your leadership skills from work to manage a family project. However, too much integration can lead to work-family conflict - like constantly checking work emails while on vacation. Conversely, rigid or segmented boundaries create a clear separation, making switching between work and personal life more effortful but reducing conflict. Recent research by Thompson et al. (2019) suggests a dynamic approach might be ideal. Individuals can adjust the flexibility of their boundaries based on the situation, favoring integration for collaboration and segmentation for focused work.

Boundary Theory

This theory, explored by Cropanzano et al. (2017), dives deeper into the psychological processes of managing these boundaries. It's not just about the flexibility of the borders, but how individuals actively create and maintain them. Factors like personality, workload, and organizational culture all play a role. For example, someone with a high need for control might create more rigid boundaries between work and personal life, while an organization with a strong focus on collaboration might encourage more permeable boundaries. Understanding these factors empowers individuals to manage their boundaries effectively, minimizing conflict and maximizing well-being.

Compensation Theory

Compensation theory refers to the efforts intended at countering negative experiences in one sphere through increased efforts for positive experiences in another Sphere. This model takes work and family as to be two spheres of life. What we couldn't find in one of the spheres, in terms of demands or satisfactions may be derived from the other sphere of life. Compensation theory of work life balance describes the efforts intended at countering unconstructive experiences in one domain via extended efforts for optimistic experiences in another domain. An example would be a dissatisfied worker focusing more on family than work, or a satisfied worker focusing on work more but compromises on family life thus reallocating his preferences for being happy in one accept difficulties in the other. As further explored by Ferguson et al. (2017), compensation theory there exists a contradictory relationship between work and life, so individuals try to satisfy voids from one domain with satisfactions from the other.

a.   Healthy balance between work and personal life studies (Work-Life Balance Studies)

The nature of work has changed throughout the world as a result of the changing social demands and economic conditions. Originally, work was a matter of survival and necessity. The composition of the workforce has changed and the role of work has evolved throughout the years. Today, work is extensively regarded as a source of personal satisfaction. According to Collins (207), a good balance in life and work can play a phenomenal role in the accomplishment of professional and personal goals. At the core of issues central to human resource development (HRD) is Work-Life balance. Workfamily balance may be a powerful leverage point for promoting organizational and individual effectiveness and that it implicitly or explicitly, is at the core of HRD's major functions (Grzywacz and Carlson, 2013).

Work-Life Balance has been an issue of concern for the last few decades. The current work scenario is marked by the changing demographics, intense pressure, fast pace of change, constant deadlines, the co-existing virtual workplace, and increased use of technology. Juxtaposed with this, the rise in living standards and the increase in average income have individuals striving for improved family, personal life and better work atmosphere (Klun, 2013).

Ford, Heinen, and Langkamer (2013) highlight the view that the fundamental theory behind the concept of "work-life balance" is that individuals have varying, and sometimes mutually exclusive, demands on them due to the roles that they play in the different facets of their lives. "Meeting the demands from one domain reduces the time and energy available to function in the other domain and this tends to create conflict when individuals seek to function effectively in both domains," (Shelton, Danes and Eisenman, 2013:318). Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer, and King (2011) and Shelton et al., (2013) suggest that in order for individuals to manage their life effectively, Work-life balance practices therefore assist them to gain greater control over their circumstances.

According to Guest (2011), the impetus for research on work-life balance has been stimulated by the arrival of Generation X, a cohort of workers who give greater importance to seeking balance between the rest of life and work. "Generations X and Y are keeping the pressure on companies to devise innovative, flexible options that give high-performing employees more control and choice in managing the competing demands of family and work" (Klun, 2013).

Earlier research had found WLB to be positively related to both individual and organisational outcomes such as giving the employees information, flexibility, and financial assistance according to Perry-Smith and Blum (2012) and Konrad and Mangel (2012)can raise employee satisfaction and labour productivity and improve the organisation's financial performance, employeeorganisational attachment and commitment as given by Wang and Walumbwa (2013) and organisational citizenship behaviour (Lambert, 2012 cited in Wang and Verma, 2015). As given by Gallinsky (2015), in order to improve mental health and productivity, improve retention, and increase employee commitment and engagement, many employers continue to strive to create better WLB.

Critchley (2011); Duxbury, Higgins and Coghill (2014) and Guest (2011) postulates that most of the work-life balance studies examine why work-life conflict occurs, what determines it, who is responsible for attaining balance, and how it is achieved. The belief behind these studies is that work gets in the way of one's life and family relationships. Life and living are generally seen as separate from working.

According to Duxbury (2014) the findings of the majority of the studies, as well as the philosophies offered in the widespread literature, focus primarily on three issues; organizational culture, individual responsibilities and organisational practices. The overarching goal for organisations is to reduce the cost of unhealthy workers and absenteeism, so that they increase profits and can remain competitive. Organisations need to provide flexible work situations for their employees, such as variability in work hours and child care as given by the work-life

balance literature. These changes alone are seen as necessary but not sufficient for work-life balance. The onus is on the individual to maintain and find work-life balance no matter what the company does to help out. In order to facilitate individual change, ideas such as the work/life ratio are offered (Duxbury 2014).

Work-life balance has always been a concern of those interested in the quality of working life and its relation to broader quality of life in the opinion of Collins (2017). In affluent societies the extreme demands of work are considered to present a distinct issue that needs to be addressed and hence Work-life balance has come to the fore in contemporary debates.

According to the opinions presented by Higgins and Duxbury (2014) and Howard, D'Onofrio and Boles (2014) organisations have to account for and recognise the array of non-work roles that impact on employees' workinglives so as to effectively manage employees' work-life balance (WLB). There is lack of clarity in the definition of work-life balance; with others pressing for the domain of personal space to be included as well and some viewing it as a balance between family and work. The domain of "life", is formed together with the aspect of personal space and family. According to Grzywacz and Carlson (2013), WLB studies in the last few years have grown leaps and bounds, yet currently there is no conceptually based scale for the measurement of work family balance directly. It has become critical that a questionnaire be used to measure work-life balance now. Work-Life Balance is in itself a misnomer (Guest, 2011). According to Ransome (2013) the division of activity will neither be easy to measure nor might equal given the fluid nature of needs and responsibilities and their changing nature at different life stages and therefore notions of cooperation and compromise, negotiation, complementarities and reciprocity be better terms than balance. Work-life balance is anything from attaining a state of equilibrium between the demands of personal life and work, to finding meaningful daily enjoyment and achievement in all parts of one's life as defined in the popular media. Collins (2007) argue that many researchers see worklife conflict and work-life balance as being on contradictory ends of a work-life continuum. The understanding of work-life balance has been primarily influenced by the studies of organisational psychologists and behaviourists, feminist researchers and sociologists (Collins, 2007). Those who acknowledge work-life balance principles believe that all individuals can achieve a state of balance to create a fulfilling and meaningful work and home life if they just apply the time and stress management techniques being offered. Work-life Balance is the opinion that a good balance between one's private life and occupation can improve both the productivity at work and quality of life (Byron, 2015). This concept often creates attention concerning the balance between childcare and work due to the accelerating trends of declining aging population and birth rate issues. However, he notes that work and family life or study also applies to work-life balance.

Crooker (2011) and Harris and Pringle (2013) opine that there is controversy surrounding the term "work-life balance" however, as modern literature has criticised its misleading connotations and ambiguity. Beatty and Torbert (2014); Harris and Pringle (2013); Jackson (2011) and Kanter (2012) hold that as a phrase it creates issues by juxtaposing "life" with "work" and therefore implying that "work" and "life" are two disconnected domains. De Bruin and Dupuis (2014); Harris and Pringle (2013); McPherson and Reed (2013) and Ransome (2013) suggested substitutes to the phrase, including "work-life integration" and "worklife mosaic". These alternatives (among others) have tried to dismiss the contrast between "work" and "life", in favour of integration. Therefore, it is evident that "work-life balance" is not a static term, but one which is evolving rapidly in order to be relevant for a greater number of people. The term "balance" has also been criticised as some believe that it posits an ideal of equality between work and life that is not appropriate for a significant number of people (Jones, et al., 2022; Thompson and Bunderson, 2014). Harris, Lewis and Massey (2015) contested the "rhetoric of balance" (Harris, et al., 2015).

b.   Need and benefits of a healthy balance between work and personal life

To understand the need of healthy balance between work and personal life, an individual ought to first understand about work life imbalance, as with the understanding of the origin, causes and effects of this imbalance, the balancing act becomes easier (Tara *et al*., 2015). Today, the corporate world is extremely demanding. The work culture varies from organisation to organisation. Today the deadlines are getting tighter, and an individual's job is not only to match that deadline but also to give quality output. It becomes exceedingly tough to maintain a family life due to this work pressure. According to Gallinsky (2015) it becomes very difficult to have the engagement of mind with the engagement of body. In every individual's life there are four stakeholders- society, family, job and own personality. It is very pertinent to give equal importance to all the stakeholders. A person who is a workaholic and does not appreciate his family life cannot be termed a successful person. When a life faces such imbalance then the peace and harmony of life disappears and there is an adverse effect of it on the work life too. This imbalance should be avoided to avoid such situations. Collins (2007) opines that the transition from work life imbalance to work life balance has obvious benefits to an organisation and its employees. At the organisational level, balanced nature of work facilitates increase in efficiency and productivity of employees. Employees derive more satisfaction from work, and they become more creative. Better communication and teamwork offer a conducive working environment. This leads to

enjoyment at work and increased passion for it. Lockwood *et al*., (2015) says that stress levels from the employee decrease thereby helping an organization to inherently develop a strong value system.

Work life balance on an individual level can bring significant changes in their life and can also heavily influence a society. Employee's health can be a benefit of a balanced work life. Stress levels reduce drastically to healthy levels. Individuals derive more value from life and from their work which is seen as a mode of self-actualization and also leads to greater satisfaction.The employee can better understand the nature of his work life balance as work life balance can vary among individuals. The commitment levels of an employee to the organisation increase at this point of time that an employee starts resting immense trust in the organization. On the social front, when relationships improve the individual gains. Shelton *et al*., (2013) highlight that the individual can now willingly devote more energy and time to his social commitments, which is also vital for a happy life. Thus, work-life balance can bring a huge change at the individual and organizational levels. It enables an organisation to inherently build a strong value system, which is credited to the work life balance enjoyed at the employee level. Consequently, the organization does not have to enforce a formulated framework of organizational values because they now become intrinsic to it. At the individual level, work life balance enjoys its accomplishment in addressing societal issues (Collins, 2013). It is a remedial action to a society from its problems such as increasing number of divorces, and its adverse effect on children and infertility among working people.

Growth and Profit Impact
Accelerated on and off-the-job expectations and stresses are unfavourably affecting top and bottom-line growth, unnecessarily driving down productivity. A well-implemented work-life strategy significantly minimises both the perceived and real overwork and out-of-balance pressures that hamper productivity, producing a very significant positive return on investment (Tara *et al*., 2015).

Full engagement and customer service
A workforce that is unnecessarily stressed, out of balance, or disgruntled critically reduces complete engagement with internal and external customers. Conversely, according to Tara *et al*.,
(2015) commitment to the clients' needs and organisation's objectives increases in direct amount to the perception that the organization is dedicated to both the work and life success of each individual.

Competitive advantage for talent
Parasuraman and Simmers (2014) suggest that demanding baby boomers--and even more, the lesser pool of younger workers--have improved their expectations of a positive work-life culture. Employees expect their employers to identify that in addition to having a job, they have a life. According to Parasuraman and Simmers (2014), this is replicated by the fact that work-life balance matters with the boss or the company are the number-one reason that individuals leave their jobs.

Health-care cost solution
Work Life Balance is also expected to have a positive impact on employee engagement Martel (2014:30, 42) highlight that employee engagement can make or break the organisation's bottom line (is of the opinion that, in order to get high performance in postindustrial, intangible work that demands speed, innovation, and flexibility, employers need to engage their employees. Engaging employees especially by giving them trust, freedom, and participation is the most complete response to the ascendant post-industrial values of selfactualization and self-realization. When employees are engaged, objectives are more easily met according to the performance data of the best companies in the US and in contrast more likely to fall short when they are not. SHRM Conference (2006) showed a dramatic change in bottom-line results in organizations with highly engaged employees when compared to organizations whose employees had low engagement scores (Bhatnagar 2013: 645) in the result of a new global employee engagement study. The significance of managing an employee's WLB has improved markedly over the past 20 years according to De Bruin and Dupuis (2014). There have been variations in several areas that directly impact on this issue. According to Hosie, Forster and Servatos (2014) firstly, employees have been put under pressure to produce quality results in shorter timeframes with fewer resources, and jobs have become more complex and that has caused redefinition of 'normal working hours. Secondly, the demographics of the labour force (i.e. dual career couples, ethnicity, gender, multigenerational workplaces, religion, etc.), and thirdly as given by Greenhaus and Powell (2011) the very nature of the contract of employment has demanded that organisations effectively manage their employee's job satisfaction, stress and wellbeing. Organisational attention in the management of the WLB originates from evidence presented by Purcell (2011:1) that, "there is little doubt any more that there is a clear connection between the way people are managed and organisational performance", and that with the onset of forecasted skill-shortages, the ability to offer effective WLB employment opportunities may become a source of competitive advantage.

Ideally, De Bruin and Dupuis (2014) and Greenblatt (2011) posit that the WLB theory obliges organisations to effectively incorporate employees' non-work and work roles such that levels of multiple-role conflict, and the associated job-dissatisfaction and stress, are avoided or minimised. According to Hacker and Doolen (2014) and Hyman and Summers (2014), western organisations have resorted to adopting limited set of policies such as on-site child-care facilities, telecommuting opportunities, on-site gymnasiums, and even on-site sleeping quarters for the employee and their family in an effort to achieve a WLB. Each has tried to increase the flexibility by which employees can enact their work-roles whilst concurrently enabling them to enact their family-based roles to the minimum extent necessary.

c. Strategies to maintaining a healthy balance between Work and personal life
Strategies for attaining healthy balance between work and personal life need to be tailored to address personal challenges just as defining balance is an individual's perception. The following subsections discuss some healthy balance between work and personal life strategies (work-life balance strategies) identified in the literature. The strategies are grouped under different categories: for Individuals, and in the workplace. Work-life balance for individuals,An important starting place for finding that elusive work-life balance is to proactively watch for signs of burnout (e.g., inability to concentrate, chronic exhaustion, unusual irritability, general dissatisfaction) (Large, 2015). Other preventative strategies include engaging in fitness activities, getting sufficient sleep and healthy eating. According to Hassen (2014), sleep deprivation may result from role overload for instance employees may stay up late or getting up early to fit everything in and has serious health and safety consequences. Regularly reviewing goals and priorities and scheduling a daily time for quiet reflection may also enable improved work-life balance as individuals become more realistic about what they can do and learn to say "no" to unrealistic demands on their time. Individuals for example could make time for a hobby that requires a slower pace (e.g., painting, reading, gardening, or yoga), eating supper at the table, leave some gaps in daily schedules, enjoying a daily technology-free break to sit quietly and reflect, and consciously monitoring one's speed (Honore, 2014).

Work-life balance in the workplace, to facilitate balance and wellness at work, many individuals find it helpful to build in short fitness breaks throughout the day (e.g., a lunchtime walk or taking the stairs to the cafeteria). Large (2014) is of the view that collaborative and communication problem-solving seem to be helpful when considering such topics as satisfying and realistic goals, delegating tasks, and other workplace concerns. Individuals that spread their holidays throughout the year and clearly decide how much of their lives work is worth report better work-life balance, although the temptation may be to disregard holidays and work excessive overtime. This fits with Limoges' (2014) maintenance philosophy of balancing holding on with letting go.
In response to all of the attention from employees and the media, companies have begun to introduce many programs to help with work life balance. Some of these programs include, parttime work, job sharing, working from home both occasionally and full-time, and allowing leave for education or family matters (De Cieri, Holmes, Abbott and Pettit, 2015). Although many companies do now offer some work life balance programs, many of these benefits are not being used (Nord, Fox, Phoenix and Viano, 2011). While some of the reasons include poor communication about program availability and improper implementation (De Cieri et al. 2015), other factors include fear of how participation will affect an employee's career (Nord et al., 2011).
De Cieri et al. found that in 50% of the companies surveyed in Australia, fewer than 20% of the employees participated in work life balance programs. Providing vacation time is probably the most common and most traditional program that can assist work life balance and many employees do not even take full advantage of their vacation time. The Families and Work Institute (2015) found that while 79% of employees have paid vacation, 36% do not plan to take the full vacation time allotted to them. They also found that on average Americans take 14.6 vacations days annually (roughly 3 weeks).

Employees who find it difficult to miss more than 3 weeks during an entire year may be less likely to take advantage of a much longer family leave. Nord *et al.* (2011) interviewed employees of two consulting firms to understand some of the difficulties employees have with work life balance programs. They interviewed employees that were taking advantage of telecommuting and a reduced work schedule. Some of the comments they received from participants include concerns that the programs are incompatible with the existing practices of assigning work and assessing performance; feelings of isolation while working at home; and lack of true support from their immediate manager. This last concern was experienced as subtle negative communication from managers and co-workers that reinforce the idea that participation in work life balance programs was counter to the organizational culture.

d.　Maintaining a healthy balance between work and personal life in employment

Commenting on maintaining healthy balance between work and personal life is primarily centred on time use – encouraging management of time through finding time by getting rid of unimportant commitments and more flexible work hours (Beck and Davis, 2015). The concept of mainintig healthy balance between work and personal (work-life balance) is in transition to support both sexes and people of all ages to comprehend the balance between their private life and occupation, with "life" including family life and raising children as well as education, hobbies, community activities and various other elements. The major concept of Work Life Balance in employment is that the employer gives the employee the ability to handle their responsibilities in and out of work while generating self-worth (Collins, 2013). This can be done by a multitude of ways (Collins, 2013).

Flexibility

The organisation's structure should make it possible for an employee to work flexible times so that they can satisfy their out of work obligations (also supported by Greenhaus and Beutell, 2011). Although it can be challenging in many industries, this can include anything from leaving early to pick up their children from school to being allowed to work via the Internet when the employee is required to handle home problems (Gutek, et al., 2012).

Achievement

If there is to be a balance between work and life an employee must have the ability to succeed in their occupation (also supported by Netemeyer *et al.*, 2013). It is a prerequisite that the employee needs to be able to succeed in and out of work to achieve this. In accordance to performance, the structure of the person's professional life needs to allow for development. Through this the person can truly shape their own destiny generating self-worth and in juxtaposition with other work life balance concepts they will be able achieve in home life as well.

Challenges to effective balance between person and work-life

A challenge to the attainment of an effective work life balance is tight nature of work schedules in many organisations (Ransome, 2013). A study in a bank to find out challenges affecting work-life balance, using interviews by McGregor (2013), found out that the nature of some jobs are too tight, that managing work-life balance becomes a challenge. From the research, the worst position found was the front office who spend the whole day attending to customers, and then after hours there is inevitably a need to balance off the accounts and amounts. Some employees and management may mistakenly think or believe that work-life balance options are only available to parents or careers, hence this poses a challenge in trying to ensure the worklife balance as in the study by Kossek and Ozeki (2010). Rigid organisations and unsupportive or inappropriate management styles also pose a threat to work-life balance whereby requests to change working patterns are not received positively by the employer (Ang, 2013). Pocock, (2015) and Harris and Pringle (2013) found out that lack of (enough) management support pose a challenge to attainment of an effective work-life balance. Ghazi (2014) and Walker and Webster (2013) suggest that it becomes a challenge for balancing work-life relationships if the flexible working options on offer are restrictive to pursue education or training opportunities.

V. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

5.1. Research Design

Christensen (2000) definesresearch design as the outline plan, or strategy specifying the procedures used in seeking an answer to the research questions. It specifies such things as how to collect and analyse data. Analysis and interpretation was done using descriptive statistics technique based on the percentages and frequencies of respondents' views in line with the set objectives. The study was designed to collect and analyze the information needed to satisfy the objectives at a lowest cost.

5.2. Study population

Population is the universe of elements in the study from which the researcher makes various references. Populations included subjects with homogenous characteristics of interest to the researcher. The target population for this study was the 40 employees of Olympic Hotel working in different departments: Chef Executive(1); General Manager (1); HR manager (1); Finance/ Accounts (2); Sous Chef (2); Food and beverage (8); Front Office (2); Maintenance (2); Housekeeping (8); Stores & Supplies (2); Security guards (4); Cook (8). Since the total population is less than 100, there is no need to sample. In research or surveys, small populations often make it feasible and practical to collect data from every individual within that population (Smith, 2008).Therefore, considering the small number of employees in Olympic Hotel, 40 employees. Using census data in the study reduced the chances of error.

5.3. Data Collection Techniques and Tools

Researcher used both primary sources and secondary sources of data in the study. Empirical data was collected from different sources to ensure their reliability and validity. The researcher collected primary data through structured questionnaires while secondary data was obtained through documentary review. Owen (2002) recommends use of questionnaires for its potential in reaching out to respondents within a short time; ability to accord respondent's adequate time to respond and offers a sense of privacy and confidentiality to the respondent.

5.4. Validity and reliability

Validity is defined as the degree to which a test measures what it purports to measure (Collins & Hussey, 2003). The researcher pre-tested the instrument by developing a pilot set of questions and asking various people to respond it, to verify whether the questions are clearly worded and easily understood and whether the respondents know the answers or not. The outcome of pilot questionnaire identified some deficiencies such as wording and some missing elements crucial to provide an answer to the specific aspect of the research.Kothari (2009) provides a definition of reliability as the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. To test the reliability of the instruments, the researcher used the test-retest reliability technique where a pilot test of questionnaires was distributed to 5 respondents to examine the appropriateness of responses given by respondents before applying the questionnaire to the entire population. The scores of the first and the second were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient formula. If there is a strong relationship between the two sets of scores, highlighting consistency between the two tests, the measurement procedure would thus be reliable. According to Silverman (2004) a coefficient of 0.7 and above is deemed reliable for the administration of the questionnaires.

VI. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Importance of Balancing Work and personal life balance to hotel workers

In the realm of hospitality, where the kitchen sizzles and guest service hums continuously, achieving a balance between work and personal life can often seem like an unattainable goal. This industry's inherent operational nature and culture necessitate extended working hours, adaptability, occasional travel, and the readiness to relocate. In an industry that operates 24/7, every day of the year, employees frequently find themselves working evenings, weekends, and holidays. As a service industry, hospitality is continuously influenced by consumers' evolving preferences. Moreover, it is highly susceptible to business cycles, seasonal fluctuations, political stability, and the ever-growing introduction of new products and trends. The multifaceted challenges in this industry necessitate a considerable investment of time and attention, surpassing the demands many other sectors face. In this line, respondents were asked to reflect on the importance of balancing work and personal life on hotel workers. Table 1 shows that the majority of the respondents agreed that balancing work and personal life is important to hotel workers as shown by the largest percentage of 54%. 43% of the workers disagreed and 3% were not sure. The realisation that the researcher got was that balancing work and personal life is important to hotel workers

Table 1: Respondents views on goodness of balancing work and personal life to hotel workers

Is balancing work and personal life important to hotel workers?		
Yes	22	54%
No	17	43%
Not Sure	1	3%
Total	**40**	**100%**

Source: Author, 2024

Work-life balance in the hospitality industry can often feel like a myth rather than a reality due to the unique demands of the industry. While some employers in the hospitality sector may offer flexible scheduling or time-off benefits, achieving a true work-life balance remains elusive for many employees. The inherent nature of the industry often prioritizes business needs over personal well-being, making it challenging for individuals to strike a harmonious balance between their professional and personal lives.

Respondents indicated that for employees, a good work-life balance can enable staff to feel more in control of their working life and lead to: increased productivity, better time management, improved personal physical and

mental health and wellbeing, reduction in sickness and absenteeism, a happier and less stressed workforce, staff feeling that their personal and/or family life is important to their employer, more valued and engaged staff, greater employee loyalty, commitment, and motivation, staff less likely to leave your employment, and opportunities for career and personal growth.

For Hotel, a good work-life balance has benefits such as: lower levels of absence, sickness, and stress, motivate and energise staff, identify more efficient working processes and practices, increase your business's productivity, outputs, and competitive advantage, boost staff morale, improve customer service, maximise flexibility to help you react to changing market conditions and meet customer demands more effectively - for example, shift work, part-time work, and flexitime can help you open longer without making your employees work longer hours, better meet seasonal peaks and troughs in your business, lead to a more committed and positive attitude in your staff, reduce staff turnover and therefore minimise recruitment costs - see control staff turnover, become recognised as a business that people want to work for and therefore help you attract top talent.

6.1. The nature of balancing work and personal life at Olympic hotel

The research assessed the nature of balancing work and personal life at Olympic hotel. The question was asked in form of five levels Likert scale where the scale of measurement was: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.The mean between 1 and 1.80 represents (strongly disagree), the mean between 1.81 until 2.60 represents (do not agree), the mean between 2.61 and 3.40 represents (true to some extent), the mean between 3:41 and 4:20 represents (agree), and the mean between 4:21 and 5:00 represents (strongly agree). Considering the standard deviation, a standard deviation close to zero indicates that data points are close to the mean, whereas a high or low standard deviation indicates data points are respectively above or below the mean (Warmbrod, 2014; Lee, Junyong, Sangseok, 2015).

The results presented in table 2 indicate that respondents unanimously agreed on items listed as nature of balancing work and personal life at Olympic hotel as indicated by the overall mean $\bar{x}$=3.68; and overall standard deviation σ= .287 closer to zero indicating the homogeneity of answers. Employees at Olympic Hotel notably express that they work extra hours at work with a mean score of 4.8 (Standard Deviation = .910). Similarly, respondents report a high level of significant stress caused by work, as indicated by the mean score of 4.00 (Standard Deviation = .021). Additionally, work pressures are noted to frequently interfere with employees' personal lives, as reflected in the mean score of 4.9 (Standard Deviation = .239). Employees also find themselves bringing work home, as indicated by the mean score of 4.9 (Standard Deviation = .267). Furthermore, employees express a moderate ability to balance work and life priorities, as reflected in the mean score of 2.78 (Standard Deviation = .058). In contrast, respondents feel they have low control over how they do their work (mean score of 2.05, Standard Deviation = .207) and manage time at work (mean score of 2.35, Standard Deviation = .309). These findings show the nature of balancing the work and personal life of Olympic employees, ranging from extended work hours and high levels of stress to difficulties in maintaining boundaries between work and personal commitments.

Table 2: Respondents views on the nature of balancing work and personal life at Olympic hotel

Respondents' views	$\bar{x}$	σ
I am able to balance work and life priorities well	2.78	.058
I often bring work home	3.3	.267
I often have to put extra hours at work	3.03	.910
Work pressures often interfere with my personal life	4.9	.239
In the past months, work has caused me significant stress	4.00	.021
I have a high degree of control over how I do my work	2.05	.207
I have a lot of control over managing my time at work	2.35	.309
Average	**3.68**	**.287**

Source: Researcher, 2024

According to the respondents, the lack of balancing work and personal life at Olympic hotel is motivated by by a series of reasons including the following: Irregular and long hours (Hospitality roles often require employees to work irregular shifts, including evenings, weekends, and holidays. This schedule disrupts traditional work hours, making it challenging to maintain a consistent routine and allocate time for personal activities); High workload and stress (The fast-paced and customer-centric nature of hospitality can lead to high levels of stress and pressure. Front-line staff are constantly juggling multiple tasks, handling customer requests, and managing unexpected situations, leaving little time for relaxation or personal pursuits); Limited downtime (Employees in hospitality may find it difficult to carve out meaningful downtime between shifts due to the demanding nature

of their jobs. This lack of downtime can lead to fatigue, burnout, and decreased overall well-being); Seasonal variability (The hospitality industry is often subject to seasonal fluctuations in business, with peak tourist seasons requiring employees to work extended hours. During these busy periods, achieving work-life balance becomes even more challenging as employees may be required to prioritize work over personal commitments); Limited flexibility (While some employers in the hospitality sector may offer flexible scheduling options, the nature of the industry often limits employees' ability to adjust their work hours to accommodate personal needs or commitments); Emotional toll: Hospitality workers often deal with demanding customers, handle complaints, and manage stressful situations with professionalism. This emotional labor can be draining and make it difficult for employees to switch off from work-related stress outside of their shifts and get a mental time out.

6.2. The challenges affecting the effective balance between work and personal life on employees' performance at Olympic hotel.

Respondents were asked to indicate the challenges affecting the effective balance between work and personal life on employees' performance at Olympic hotel. The question was asked in form of five levels Likert scale where the scale of measurement was: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.The mean between 1 and 1.80 represents (strongly disagree), the mean between 1.81 until 2.60 represents (do not agree), the mean between 2.61 and 3.40 represents (true to some extent), the mean between 3:41 and 4:20 represents (agree), and the mean between 4:21 and 5:00 represents (strongly agree). Considering the standard deviation, a standard deviation close to zero indicates that data points are close to the mean, whereas a high or low standard deviation indicates data points are respectively above or below the mean (Warmbrod, 2014; Lee, Junyong, Sangseok, 2015).

The results presented in table 3 indicate that the respondents agreed on the listed challenges to impacting the effective balance between work and personal life at Olympic Hotel as indicated by the overall mean x̄ = 3.51; and overall standards deviation σ= .814. These challenges exercise influence on employees' performance. Respondents agreed on the challenge posed by the "general business environment," with a mean score of 3.57 (Standard Deviation = 0.72). This high level of agreement suggests a widespread perception among respondents that the overall business environment presents significant barriers to achieving a satisfactory work-life balance. Similarly, respondents emphasized the "tight nature of work schedules," reflected in a mean score of 3.89 (Standard Deviation = 0.92), indicating a consensus regarding the challenge posed by demanding work schedules to maintaining a harmonious work-life balance. Additionally, respondents expressed concerns about the "limited work-life balance options for non-parents or caregivers," with a mean score of 3.46 (Standard Deviation = 0.74). This underscores the perceived limitation in accessing work-life balance benefits for employees who are not parents or caregivers, posing difficulties in balancing work and personal commitments. Moreover, respondents identified the "restrictive nature of flexible working options" as a significant concern, with a mean score of 3.20 (Standard Deviation = 0.73), indicating a perceived limitation in the flexibility of available work arrangements. Finally, respondents highlighted the lack of support for "pursuing education or training opportunities" within the organization, reflected in a mean score of 3.14 (Standard Deviation = 0.85). This suggests a moderate agreement that insufficient support for professional development initiatives may hinder employees' ability to achieve a satisfactory work-life balance. Overall, these findings show the challenges faced by employees at Olympic Hotel in achieving a balanced work and personal life, ranging from external factors like the general business environment to internal issues such as rigid work schedules and limited support for alternative working arrangements and professional development opportunities. Addressing these challenges comprehensively is crucial for promoting employee well-being and enhancing overall performance within the organization.

Additional challenges identified include: not enough time off: Employees sometimes do not receive adequate time off from work, leading to fatigue and difficulty in balancing personal life activities; not knowing where to get help: Employees are unaware of available support programs within the hotel, making it challenging for them to seek assistance for issues like stress or personal problems; and unclear expectations about working hours: Employees lack clarity on their expected working hours, making it difficult for them to plan personal activities around their work schedule.

Table 3: Respondents views on the challenges to effective balance of personal and work life at Olympic hotel

Challenge	x̄	σ
Tight nature of work schedules	3.89	.921
Work-life balance options are only available to parents or careers	3.46	.740
Requests to change working patterns are not received positively by the employer	3.14	.880
The flexible working options on offer are restrictive	3.2	.732

The employer does not do enough to enable people to pursue education or training opportunities	3.14	.851
The organisational culture is prohibitive of pursuit of life issues	3.14	.850
The general business environment is prohibitive	3.57	.722
Average	**3.51**	**.814**

Source: Author, 2024.

6.3. Proposed ways forward for effective balance between work and personal life on employees' performance at Olympichotel.

The Third objective sought to proposesolutions to the challenges affecting the effective balance between work and personal life on employees' performance at Olympic hotel. The question was asked in form of five levels Likert scale where the scale of measurement was: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. The mean between 1 and 1.80 represents (strongly disagree), the mean between 1.81 until 2.60 represents (do not agree), the mean between 2.61 and 3.40 represents (true to some extent), the mean between 3:41 and 4:20 represents (agree), and the mean between 4:21 and 5:00 represents (strongly agree). Considering the standard deviation, a standard deviation close to zero indicates that data points are close to the mean, whereas a high or low standard deviation indicates data points are respectively above or below the mean (Warmbrod, 2014; Lee, Junyong, Sangseok, 2015).

The results presented in table 4 define ways forward for effective balance between work and personal life at Olympic Hotel and its impact on employees' performance. Respondents agreed on defined ways forward as indicated by the overall mean x̄ = 3.62; and overall standard deviation σ= .600. More specifically, respondents strongly supported "Better pay and conditions," reflected in its high mean score of 3.95 (Standard Deviation = .810), indicating a consensus on the need for improved compensation and working conditions. "Greater flexibility in working arrangements" closely follows with a mean score of 3.43 (Standard Deviation = .540), showing a shared desire for more adaptable work schedules. Similarly, "More support for parents to pay for childcare" received a mean score of 3.43 (Standard Deviation = .730), suggesting a perceived necessity for increased assistance in this area. "Extending work-life balance options to those without children" obtained a mean score of 3.28 (Standard Deviation = .700), affirming the belief that work-life balance should be accessible to all employees, not just parents. Lastly, "Better maternity or paternity leave offerings" got a mean score of 3.10 (Standard Deviation = .460), while job sharing received a mean of 2.93 (Standard Deviation = .360). Overall, respondents prioritized better pay and conditions, flexibility in working arrangements, and childcare support, with extending work-life balance options and enhancing maternity or paternity leave offerings following closely behind, while job sharing was seen as slightly less urgent.

Additional proposed solutions include:Offer financial support or reimbursement for employees pursuing education or training relevant to their roles; paid time off flexibility: provide options for employees to use their paid time off (PTO) in smaller increments, such as half-days or hours, allowing for more frequent breaks or shorter workdays when needed; regular check-ins and feedback: conduct regular check-ins with employees to discuss workload, stress levels, and work-life balance. Encourage open dialogue and provide constructive feedback to support employees in managing their responsibilities effectively.

Table 4: Ways forward for effective balance between work and personal life on employees' performance at Olympic hotel

Solutions	x̄	σ
Job sharing	4.50	.360
Greater flexibility in working arrangements	3.43	.540
Extending work-life balance options to those without children	3.28	.700
Better pay and conditions	3.95	.810
Better maternity or paternity leave offerings	3.10	.460
More support for parents to pay for childcare	3.43	.730
Average	**3.62**	**.600**

Source: Author, 2024.

VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Work-life balance isn't easy to achieve in any industry, but it's especially tough in the hospitality field for a few different reasons: Sporadic scheduling – It won't come as a surprise to anyone who has worked in hospitality to know that the schedule requirements of the industry pose serious challenges. Most people do not work Monday

– Friday, and shifts can vary between morning, afternoon, evening, and night-time. The worker shortages and constant shift swapping make things irregular and can be frustrating. Worker shortage – Compared to 2020 levels, the hotel industry is still facing a shortage with about 500,000 open positions. This means most establishments are short-staffed, putting high pressure on current employees and leaving them with limited downtime. Employee turnover – Some studies point to a turnover rate of about 84% in the hospitality industry, compared to less than 50% in other areas. For a variety of reasons, hotels and restaurants are particularly susceptible to high turnover rates, which has a huge impact on the employees who remain. High-pressure environments – The hospitality industry comes with some lofty customer expectations and it tends to happen in a fast-paced atmosphere. Workers are often judged based on their speed or customer satisfaction. Hospitality workers are trained to handle a high volume of tasks and provide excellent service under pressure. Limited flexibility – The nature of hospitality jobs means that, for the majority of the workforce, workers need to be physically present for their shifts. While much of the world is now taking advantage of working from home or flexible hour arrangements, hospitality workers can't usually make the most of these benefits.

Balancing organizational work-life harmony while maintaining excellent customer service is crucial in the hospitality industry. A number of mechanisms may help hospitality leaders to achieve this delicate balance namely: Implementation of efficient scheduling systems (Utilize advanced scheduling software to optimize staffing levels and allocate shifts based on employee availability and preferences. This ensures that the workload is evenly distributed while allowing employees to maintain a healthy work-life balance and lead a fulfilling life); Cross-train employees (Cross-training employees in various roles within the organization enhances flexibility and enables smoother operations during busy periods or staff shortages. It also prevents burnout by providing employees with diverse tasks and responsibilities); Promote time management skills (Offer training sessions or workshops to help employees improve their time management skills. Teach them effective prioritization techniques and encourage them to set boundaries between work, family events, and personal life to avoid overwork); Provide remote work opportunities (Where feasible, allow employees to work remotely for certain tasks or roles. Remote work options can offer greater flexibility and autonomy, enabling employees to better balance work commitments with personal responsibilities); Encourage self-care practices (promote a culture of self-care by providing resources and initiatives aimed at improving employees' physical and mental well-being. This could include wellness programs, mindfulness sessions, or access to fitness facilities); Offer flexible leave policies (Implement flexible leave policies that accommodate employees' personal needs, such as parental leave, caregiving leave, or sabbaticals); Ensure that employees feel supported and empowered to respect personal life boundaries and take time off when necessary, without fear of repercussions; Empower front-line staff (Trust and empower front-line staff to make autonomous decisions to resolve customer issues or handle situations that may arise); and Providing them with the authority to take appropriate actions fosters a sense of ownership and reduces reliance on managerial intervention, thus alleviating stress and workload for all parties involved.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MANAGEMENT OF OLYMPIC HOTEL

The research recommends the following best practices for Olympic Hotel supervisors to support employees' work-life balance:

(i) Implement flexible scheduling: Offer flexible scheduling options to accommodate employees' personal needs and preferences, such as allowing them to swap shifts or adjust their work hours when possible.

(ii) Provide adequate staffing levels: Avoid overworking employees by ensuring that staffing levels are sufficient to handle workload demands. This helps prevent burnout and allows employees to maintain a healthier work-life balance.

(iii) Set clear expectations: Communicate clear expectations regarding work hours, responsibilities, and performance standards to avoid misunderstandings and reduce stress among team members.

(iv) Encourage time off: Actively encourage employees to take their allocated vacation days, personal days, and rest breaks to recharge and rejuvenate outside of work.

(v) Lead by example: Demonstrate the importance of work-life balance by modeling healthy behaviors yourself, such as taking regular breaks, leaving work on time, and prioritizing time with family and friends.

(vi) Offer employee assistance programs (EAPs): Provide access to counseling services, stress management resources, and other support programs to help employees cope with personal challenges and maintain their mental well-being.

(vii) Foster open communication: Create a supportive environment where employees feel comfortable discussing their work-life balance needs, concerns, and suggestions for improvement without fear of judgment or reprisal.

(viii)   Recognize and reward work-life balance: Acknowledge and reward employees who demonstrate a balance between personal and professional lives, such as by providing incentives for taking time off or achieving work-related goals while maintaining personal well-being.

(ix)   Conduct regular check-ins: Schedule regular one-on-one meetings with employees to assess their work-life balance, address any issues or challenges they may be facing, and offer support and guidance as needed.

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