WORK LIFE BALANCE IN SERVICE SECTOR IN UGANDA, ACASE OF MEDIUM HOTELS IN FORT PORTAL TOURIST CITY.

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Abstract

With the influx of Ugandan teenagers seeking employment in the hotel sector, the issue of work-life balance is at the forefront as most of these workers are working under precarious conditions. Through a cross sectional survey design, this article investigated the extent to which manager in hotel industry have implemented and observed work-life policies. The status of the current working conditions in hotels and the justification for its existence as well as how hotel employees are affected by such conditions has been explored.

The finding indicated that the conditions of work in hotels of Fort Portal don't reflect work-life balance environment and the hotel workers are negatively affected by the existing work conditions. Furthermore, the managers are unable to implement work-life balance policies due to negative attitude, bad mentality, weak laws and enforcement, family interference in the management of hotels and unqualified managers running these hotels. The study recommends a comprehensive study to that will seek solutions from the various stakeholders to addressing these challenges facing the hotel industry.

Key words: Work-life balance, Hotel industry, precarious working conditions.

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1. Introduction

The liberalization policy in Uganda coupled with the tourism attraction nature of the country has opened way to the establishment of hotels in most of parts of the country, thus employing thousands of Ugandans. With this, hotel sector maintaining an acceptable work-life balance is a challenge, yet it is a cardinal role for managers to ensure the observation policies and best practices that enable workers to strike a balance between the work requirements and demands for their personal life. Despite the fact that the idea of work-life balance is crucial in enhancing performance less attention has been paid to the implementation of policies and best work practices in the hotel sector, many of the youth and teenagers have found themselves in precarious condition at the expense of earning a living.

Fort portal City also known as the Tourism City in Uganda because it is endowed with a wide range of tourist attraction and number of tourist facilities have been established which at one hand is a blessing as it has offered employment opportunities to teenagers and the youth within the region. However, on the other hand by critically examining the management of employees in the hotel industry is an exploitative game as pointed out by Thomas (2003) as cited in Lwanga, Mbabazize, Katuramu & Barigayomwe (2020) that manager or owners of resources of production use them exploitatively to satisfy selfish interests at the expense of the needs of others. Therefore, the failure by managers or hotel owners to implement practices that foster work-life balance is a deliberate move to satisfy they needs. Managers assume that employees are not supposed to be paid what is beyond their marginal productivity; that's the salary paid is equivalent to their marginal productivity of labour and the managers will proudly state that they are paying adequate remuneration O'Hora (2018) as cited in (Lwanga et al., 2020). This justifies the existence working condition that these youth are working under, that leaves a lot to be desired in terms of promoting work-life best practices and policies within the hotel sector. Work life balances as an aspect that involves the welfare of employees' life in relation to their work requirements is of paramount importance in the attainment of the objectives of any organization (Bello and Tanko, 2020).

In Uganda and more so in the tourist cities like Fort Portal numerous hotels have sprung up not because of offering services but accrue profits, this orientation towards profit has cast the workers in this industry to precarious working conditions with little or no attention paid to their life. In the modern context, work life balance is increasingly challenging, the challenge arises from the fact that it is not easy to strike the balance between work and other domains of life (Khateeb, 2021). In Uganda today the hotel is treated as being synonymous to stress and high-pressure environment characterized with long, unpredictable working hours, extra load without pay, work without contracts, no protective gears etc. (Jeanette et al., 2007). To avert further consequences of stress and high-pressure environment the manager in the hotel industry have to seek for ways maintaining an acceptable work-life balances (Dolai, 2015).

This cross section survey was intended to explore the extent to which managers of various hotels have implemented policies and best practices that enhances work-life balances within the medium hotels in Fort Portal Tourist City, so as to inform the feature development of this sector within the tourism city. The following objectives guided the survey: To examine the working conditions under which workers in the medium hotels work under in Fort Portal Tourist City, To establish the extent to which the hotel working conditions affect personal life of employees in Fort Portal Tourist City and the challenges that have hampered the management of these hotels from implementing work-life policies and best practices in Fort Portal Tourist City.

The hotel industry in Uganda

The hotel industry in Uganda and the World at large is a booming industry with service ranging from Resorts, Hotels, Motel, and others, in terms employment the hotel industry with its sister industry the tourist industry provide 420,000 employment opportunities as per 2008-2012 Uganda national export survey and in terms of foreign exchange earning the two contributes US\$ 564 million (tourism sector profile 2012). Because of the nature of the

services provided by the hotel industry that ranges from meals, in-house conference, accommodation, tour and tourist etc. many of these services are 24 hours operation which translates into 24 hours duty to the staff. Staff normally work for long hours or in shifts to meet the needs of their customers. The high demand or pressure that these jobs have inflicted on the employees many of their lives are in danger as result of the occupational hazards associated with these jobs. The tour and tourism services are mostly provide by resorts which are in most cases built along beach sites or in jangle of thick forests where guest can spending their leisure time in comfort. The accommodation service are provided by hotels where they are graded into level ranging from five star, four star and three star and so on, with the implication that the high the star the high the quality of service and price (G.O.U, 2014). Uganda has 1300 registered establishment offering accommodation with 20,000 rooms and 30, 000 beds (tourism sector profile 2012). Working under the hotel industry means working to meet the satisfaction of demanding clients and managers and this is one of the most downside of working in the industry. Even though satisfaction of the customer's needs is the goal of the hotel management, managers have paid little attention towards the personal needs of the employees which has a bearing on performance; hence turning the working conditions to be precarious to the employees.

Work-life balance

The concept work life balance has three terms that need to be understood in order to fully conceptualize it; work, life and balance. Work, according to Clarke, Koch & Hill, (2004), means the actions in which intellectual or physical abilities are required to achieve it. While balance is concerned with the provision of stability between the domain of life and work. However, several scholars have provided different definitions of work life balance; for example, Emslie & Hunt (2009) defines work life balance as the satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home, with a minimum of role conflict. Delecta (2011) defines work life balance as an individual ability to meet their work commitments as well as other non-work and family commitment." while Pillinger (2001) defines work life balance as the flexible working arrangements that allow the employees to avail of working arrangements that provide a balance between work responsibilities and personal responsibilities. In general, Gragnano et al., (2020) asserts that work life balance is concerned with the welfare of the employees. Work life balance is the individual perception that work and non-work activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual's current life priorities (Kalliath T. and Brough P., 2008).

From these scholars it can be concluded that work-life balances in hotels industry stands for a working environment in which workers are able to perform their duties without compromising their personal and family activities. In other words, the existence of an equilibrium between the hotel activities and family or personal activities of the employees. In the 21st century work-life balance has attracted attention of organization leaders and managers as it is one of the work-related issues affecting productivity of employees not only in the hotel sector but even in other sectors. Within the hotel industry research has shown that employees are reported to have high stress levels due to negative work-life balance resulting from the long hours of work and large number of hotel activities that exist (Jeanette N.C, etal. 2007). Yet the hotels deals with people's welfare and their

wellbeing; this requires a well-motivated, committed and stress-free staff that are ready to provide the required service to the expectations of clients.

Work-life balance in hotel sector or even other sectors includes three aspects; (1) the length of work; (2) the time of work; and (3) the place of work (Glynn et al., 2002). The flexible work policies like part-time working, temporary working, working from home and flexible working hours, compressed working weeks, annualized hours and career breaks are key and becoming a priority for hotels and throughout the corporate world. (Maxwell and McDougall, 2004). Byrne, (2005) noted that people are attracted to organizations that provide family friendly policies; this translates into attracting better talented and productive employees, reduced work stress and absenteeism, better motivation, employer branding and effective work practice. The question here is "Do hotels in Fort Portal provide appropriate working conditions that enhance employees work life balance?"

1.1.Theoretical framework

Elton Mayo's Human relations theory was adopted for this study, though there other theories such as the social exchange theory, psychological contract theory which explains the unwritten contract between the employer and the employee; as the employer expects total obedience and performance towards the fulfillment of organization objectives the employee likewise expects the employer to take into consideration his personal needs while at work other than salary (Sarker and Khan, 2013). But since our aim was to explore the implementation of work-life policies and practices within the hotel industry, Human relations provides the best framework as basis to scrutinize the relevance, impact and approaches towards implementing work-life balance practices.

According to Mayo's theory which was developed in opposition of Taylor and Gilbreth's efforts that had portrayed employees as machines and the manager's focus was on how to maximize efficiency. Mayo on the contrary focused on how to build a mutual relationship between the managers and the employees given that worker's attitude towards their managers affect the level of performance (Sarker and Khan, 2013). And the manager or leader's behavior towards the employees affects their performance. Managers need to elicit cooperative behavior from their subordinates then productivity would increase. The cooperative behavior or attitude toward employee is that behavior that take into consideration personal needs while at work as human beings, manager striking a balance between work requirements from the employee and their personal needs and human beings. Mayo argue that as managers push for the achievement of performance targets from the employee consideration should be given to their personal needs and mangers support the employee to meet their personal life needs. Mayo advocate for behaviors that attract good will, cooperation of workers and skills in managing informal organizations (Sarker and Khan, 2013). The human relations theory illuminates how feelings, thoughts and behavior of workers and managers affect performance. The work-life balance doctrine is synonym of employer-employee relationship that also determines the organization performance and the rate of employment turnover.

In the hotel industry because it is private profit oriented, issues of work-life balance have been paid little attention and the high levels of unemployment in Uganda have left those working in the industry with no choice. Managers only are focused on maximization of the

performance targets out of these workers; the working conditions, the rights of the employee and the health are secondly to them. The subsequent sections of this article covers the literature review, methodology, findings and discussion, recommendation and conclusion on the subject matter.

2. Literature review

Working conditions in Hotel sector in Uganda

As global competition between centuries increase, the workers who are the backbone of this competition are the verge of death because of the working conditions that have turned out to be precarious. Precarious in that today's employment is irregular or non-standardized characterized by uncertainty in the duration of the labour contracts, psychological job insecurity, employment strain, low wages, lack of benefits, hazardous physical and psychological working conditions and absence of legal protection yet they are expected to sustain the grip of the completion (Muntaner, 2016). The concerns of the employees in regard to the above indicators of precarious employment are far away from the reach of the manager or the proprietors of these firms.

Unfavorable working conditions in Uganda and globally are a common phenomenon in the informal sector, Muntaner (2016) argue that this is a result of the fact that this sector is not well regulated by the legal frameworks of a particular country; hence leaving many employees with not legal labour contracts. Many proprietors with in the hotel industry have not fully registered their businesses, where the business is registered workers are not provided with labour contracts nor are registered with the national social security fund and surprisingly statutory deductions like pay as you earn, 5% of NSSF are deducted monthly. The unfavorable working conditions are dominating the contemporary labour market and within the hotel industry with employee majority holding a certificate of education with on specific field makes their bargaining power low given the demand on the labour market also being low; thus making them vulnerable for unfavorable working conditions.

Related to this is the weak legal system that have failed to curb and define minimum working conditions, many countries including Uganda in Africa have failed to enact laws on minimum wage. Muntaner (2016) contend that labour market regulations such as social protection as well as healthcare are needed to enforce better working conditions in the informal sector. If the predetermining factors for the existence of the poor working conditions not attended to these conditions are here to stay. Furthermore, Standing (2011) contend that increasing labour market flexibility accounts for unfavorable working conditions, as a result of uncertainties in the labour market and in employment characterized by flexible, unstable and short term jobs without prospect for the future. Standing further opines that workers in these precarious conditions lack stable occupational identities, access to future career and social protection. These conditions are escalated by global macro-economic changes such as privatization, liberalization as these give fertile grounds for extreme precarious conditions Kalleberg (2009) as cited in (Nielsen, 2018)

Effects of Hotel working conditions on personal life

Mullen (2015) define work-life balance as achieving a balance between work and life style ambitions. He further opines that the implication is that the two (work and life) should be in the state of equilibrium. However, where there is no balance between the two, the work

is characterized by stress that manifests as physical complaints and emotional anxiety Luca (2014) as cited in Mullen, 2015). The concept of work –life balance examines how work intertwines with other spheres of life, the recognition of the essential interconnections between all forms of work undertaken by the employee and how it impact on the spheres of life of the employee (Warren, 2021).Warren further argue that work-life balance is also associated with gender inequalities at work place.

Employees in the hospitality industry like hotels are found to be the basis of maintaining 24/7 operations of this industry running effectively and this requires them to work non-standardized hours (O'Neill and Follomer, 2020). Managers of these organizations are also working in challenging conditions as they are expected to be on-call, this even when they are not present at work they are with it mentally, emotionally and technologically Cleveland et al (2007) cited in (O'Neill and Follomer, 2020). Working conditions that are precarious have psychological and physical and emotional consequences to the workers which have far reaching consequences to the organization too. Muntaner (2016) claims that psychological precarious work would lead to modifying the behavior of the vulnerable worker so that they can adjust to the labour market or demands of the job. The adjustment may be necessary in fovour of meeting the goals of the organization but with significant effect on the performance standards.

Working in this hospitality industry like in hotel places more value on face time that's the amount of time an employee spends at the organization because the work cannot be performed remotely (O'Neill and Follomer, 2020). This leaves them with little time to attend to other social spheres of life, O'Neill and Follomer (2020) further indicate that despite the fact that the work demand high face time, employees reap relatively low wages and employment benefits compared to other employees in other sector. These low wages and lack of other social benefits have made employees unable to meet their personal life requirements and as a result it has pushed them into more precarious employment. As Warren (2021) claims that financial security can safeguard workers from having too much time in their jobs or from searching for additional jobs in order to make ends meet. In the same vain O'Neill and Follomer (2020) contend that these circumstances have made employees in hospitality industry unable to balance their work lives and personal/family lives such as seeking medical care or missing a day to care for their dependents.

The working conditions in the hospitality industry coupled with nonstandard working hours, high emphasis on face time, low wages and benefits results into a feeling of conflict between one's work responsibility and family responsibility (O'Neill and Follomer, 2020). This situation of dual strain is referred to as work-family conflict which Greebhaus and Beutell (11985) defined as a form of inter role conflict in which the role pressure from the work and the family domains are mutually incompatible in some respects. Greenhaus and Beutell further identifies three forms conflicts from failure to balance work and life that's: Time based conflict which is a result of employee spending time completing activities in one role which prevents him or her from completing activities in another role. Behavior conflict which occur when individual are unable to adjust their behavior across roles that's an individual transfers the behavior in one role into another role. And lastly strain based conflicts which occur when an employee experiences strain from one role which subsequently influences his/her behavior in another role. As a result of failure to

implement work-life balance practices employees are experiencing all these form of conflicts as the work conflict is responsible for the conflicts in their families.

Challenges for implementing Work-life balance Policies and best practices

Work-life balance according to Frone (2003) indicates the absence of conflict between work and non-work roles and on the contrary, Greenhaus et al., (2003) claims that work-life conflict arise when work demands are perceived as so overly high, resulting into stress, burnout or reduced job satisfaction as cited in (Bauwmeester, Atkinson, Nourg & Roustsalainen, 2021). Work-life balance practices focusing on eradicating working conditions that are unfavorable for workers which are also seen as precarious employment relationships which calls for change in labour market policies and practices. Therefore, work-life policies are designed to regulate experiences of work-life conflicts and support or compensate employees aiming for a better work-life balance (Bauwmeester et al., 2021). However, in many African countries observation of these international and national standards geared towards implementing work-life practices have not been fully adopted by the proprietors within the hotel industry.

The failure by these African governments to implement policies that curb down these precarious conditions produces new forms of marginalization in the labour market (Nielsen, Dyreburg &Lipscomb, 2018). Yet where policies and practices fostering work-life balance are implemented they create a win-win effect that's improving working lives and boosting organization performance (Warren, 2016). Warren further contend that by managers instituting work-life balance best practices helps the organization to attract and retain employees, improve their commitment to the organization which all contribute to the success of the organization.

Despite the un-exhaustive list of benefits attached to adhering to work-life balance best practices its implementation has limitations as the concept itself has become contentious and the debate over its validity is continuous (Warren, 2016). Furthermore, the interpretation of the terms related to the concept 'work-life balance' such as 'work' 'life' and 'balance' are under scrutiny as to what they really stands for and as to whether they are the right terms to reconcile articulate the two domains together Fargan et al., (2012) as cited in (Warren, 2016). Most of the policies focus to heavily only on issues of time squeeze, thus offering enough hours free from work and work spillovers which carries a negative connotation in the eyes of the employer that more time should be offered to workers to spend time with their families, friends and community Pedersen and Lewis (2012) as cited in (Warren, 2016). Yet time off work is the most widespread work-life balance solution globally through arrangements like maternity and paternity leaves, reduced working time and various flexi-time possibilities.

The issue of work-time squeeze instead of being a public issue that calls for government interventions it has been left to business proprietor and it has become a struggle for employee demanding for adjustment (Warren, 2016). Further, given the fact that work-time squeeze does not equally affect all categories of employment has made the managers and supervisors to turn a blind eye on the urgency of implementing work-life balance practices as majority are not affected (Warren, 2016). The various work-life balance movements in various industrial sectors have also been put at risk when workers are experiencing or living in fear of financial hardships, thus fear to demand the favorable conditions as the

consequences may be negative on the other hand the employers promoting good working conditions is a cost and where the organization is experiencing financial hardships work-life balance suffers. Implementation of work-life balance practices is an active evidence based strategy that starts with establishing an inventory that can assist individuals to focus on priority areas where rapid success can be achieved.

Bauwmeester et al., (2021) further cites work-life balance policies such as health care arrangement, fitness programs, extending holiday, having option to work part-time, flexible work time. Though monitory compensation can help to cope better with non-work stressors, for instance due to salary increment other domestic work such as child care can be outsourced, Cowan and Huffman (2007) cited in Bauwmeester et al., (2021) downplays the monetary compensation as employee may not have time to spend the additional money and also limited as employees also have non-monetary job expectations Himes and Corbone (2013) as cited in (Bauwmeester et al., 2021). Non-monetary policies have been favored that may take forms of career progress in return to over working, development of relevant skills such as stress management, improving time management, and learning to run meetings effectively Grawitch et al., (2010) as cited in (Bauwmeester et al., 2021).

3. Research Methods

The study adopted a descriptive cross sectional survey design involving a triangulation of both quantitative and qualitative approaches (Bryman, 2012) the design was deemed appropriate as the qualitative results obtained through in-depth interviews supplemented quantitative data on the working conditions in the hotel industry, how these conditions affect the employees and the reasons as to why managers have not fully adhered to issues of work-life balance. A sample of four (4) medium hotels were purposively selected for the study out of the six targeted medium hotels in Fort Portal tourist city. A population sample of 145 out of 218 targeted participants as per Morgan's table of sample size determination was selected using cluster random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. The population included three categories of participants that's the managers, supervisors and operational staff regardless of their departments. Quantitative data was collected using a valid structured questionnaire containing items that measured participant's perception on each of the variable using the Likert scale running from strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, neutral = 3, disagree = 2 and strongly disagree = 1. Unstructured interview was also employed to solicit data from managers and supervisors who because of the central role in the implementation of work-life balance it was imperative to have a detailed account from them. Quantitative data analysis was done through a simple descriptive analysis given that this was not a relational study and so the establishment of the relationship between or among the variables study was outside the scope of the study. Qualitative data was also analyzed through content analysis that extracted concepts, themes and categories that describes the various issues pertaining the status of work-life balance within the hotel industry in Fort Portal.

4. Results and analysis

The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which managers of various hotels have implemented policies and best practices that enhances work-life balances within the medium hotels in Fort Portal Tourist City, so as to inform the feature development of this sector within the city. To deliver on this major objective, the study assessed the status of

the current working conditions to determine whether they reflect the work-life balance environment, the study also looked into how the employees are affect by the working conditions that prevail in these hotels and lastly the study sought to know the reason as to why the managers have failed to implement the work-life balance practices and policies. In the subsequent sections the answers adduced from both qualitative and quantitative data analysis to these points of concern are presented.

Description of the respondents
Participants' gender
The participants' gender was established and the response are indicated in Table 1.
Table 1: Showing participants' gender.

		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	Male	61	42.7	42.7	42.7
	Female	82	57.3	57.3	100.0
	Total	143	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 reveals that majority of participants were females at 57.3% compared to the males who constituted 42.7%. This suggests that medium hotels in Fort Portal Tourism City prefer employing female works than male works. This probably may mean that female persons are readily available to offer services in the hotel sector than their male counterparts.

Participants' age
The age of the participants was also determined and the results are indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Showing participants' age

		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	15-20	40	28.0	28.0	28.0
	21-25	57	39.9	39.9	67.8
	25-30	36	25.2	25.2	93.0
	31-40	10	7.0	7.0	100.0
	Total	143	100.0	100.0	

The results in Table 2 suggests that the distribution of the participants by age as 28% for 1-20 years, 39.9% for 21-25years, 25.2% for 25-30 years and 7% for 31-40 years. This indicates that majority of the hotel workers in Fort Portal are in the age bracket of 21-25 years. This is probably because the hotel work requires young and energetic persons majority of who are in the youthful age.

Participants' level of education

The level of education of the participants is illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3: Showing Participants level of education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	PLE	18	12.6	12.6	12.6
	UCE	59	41.3	41.3	53.8
	Certificate	9	6.3	6.3	60.1
	UACE	33	23.1	23.1	83.2
	Diploma	24	16.8	16.8	100.0
	Total	143	100.0	100.0	

The participants' level of education ranges from primary (PLE), form four (UCE), form six (UACE), certificate, and diploma with most of the participants at UCE level and every few at certificate level as indicated in Table 3. This indicates that employees in the hotels of Fort Portal have attained PLE and UCE level of education. However, the sector has attracted very few persons at certificate level and diploma level. This is an indication that most of the employees are either UCE or UACE leavers who do not have any qualification related to hotel management but learn on the Job. This low level of education by majority worker has contributed to proprietor's bad mentality towards worker hence poorly treated; as one of the participant interviewed narrated:

"there is also a mentality by the proprietors to think that those working in hotels are failures and they deserve to be treated like that"

This education status within the hotel industry could also be attributed to proprietors who prefer cheap labour and they know that persons with low levels of education are not so expensive in terms of hiring them. One of the participant interviewed explained that:

"proprietors want to recruit unqualified person because they offer cheap labour"

Participants' positions

The positions held by different participants is illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4: Showing Participants' designations/positions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Manager	10	7.0	7.0	7.0
	Receptionist	15	10.5	10.5	17.5
	Waitress	60	42.0	42.0	59.4
	Chef	31	21.7	21.7	81.1
	Cashier	6	4.2	4.2	85.3
	Supervisor	21	14.7	14.7	100.0
	Total	143	100.0	100.0	

The study revealed as illustrated in Table 4 that majority of the participants were in the position of waitress (42%), followed by those in chef's position, supervisors, Receptionists, managers and cashiers. This indicates that the hotel position that takes mot employees is the waitress position.

Participants' marital status

The marital status of participants is illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5: Showing Participants' Marital status

		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	Single	73	51.0	51.0	51.0
	Married	40	28.0	28.0	79.0
	Cohabiting	30	21.0	21.0	100.0
	Total	143	100.0	100.0	

From Table 5, most of the participants indicated that they were single (51%), while a considerable percentage (28%) indicated that they were married and few (21%) indicated that they were cohabiting. These results suggests that majority of the people who work in hotels are still single, which is also justified by the age of most of the hotel workers of 21-25 years as in Table 4.

Participants' number of dependents/children

The number of children/dependents for each participant was found, the results are indicated in Table 6.

Table 6: Showing participants' number of children/dependents

		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	1-2	97	67.8	67.8	67.8
	3-4	25	17.5	17.5	85.3
	5-6	15	10.5	10.5	95.8
	Above 6	6	4.2	4.2	100.0
	Total	143	100.0	100.0	

The results in Table 6 indicated that 67.8% of the participants have 1 or 2 children or dependents, while 17.5% have 3 or 4 10.5% have 5 or 6 and 4.2% have above 6. This indicates that majority of the employees in the hotels of Fort Portal have 1 of 2 dependents/children while very few have 6 or above dependents/children (Table6). This indicates that most of the employees are either still young to get children or do have no interest to have many children or the conditions of work dictates on their way of life. The industry with 67% of its employees having dependents and 28% married requires to develop policies and practices that streamlines work-life balance as Byrne (2005) noted that people are attracted to organizations that provide family friendly policies; hence attracting better talented and productive employees.

Participants' working hours per day

The number of hours worked by each hotel worker is indicated in Table 7.

Table 7: Showing Participants' working hours per day.

		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	Less than 6	24	16.8	16.8	16.8
	6 to 12	61	42.7	42.7	59.4
	12 to 18	58	40.6	40.6	100.0
	Total	143	100.0	100.0	

According to Table 7, the study also, revealed that majority of the participants work for 6-12 hours, followed by those that work for 12 to 18 hours and lastly less than 6 hours. This suggest that most of the hotels in Fort portal do not allow shifts but rather employees work for whole day or beyond. This reflect what participants interviewed referred to as straight shift which are the conditions of work where the employee is allocated no time to rest and work beyond normal working hours. One of the participant interviewed defined straight shifts as:

"Straight shift here we work from 7:30 Am to 9:00Pm and a times we go beyond that"

The participant contrasted straight shift to normal shifts by adding that:

"workers dislike straight shift which run from 7:00 am to 9:00Pm, these are so stressful but normal shifts are 8hourly and the work is given one day off"

Such long hours of work are reported to have high stress levels due to negative work-life balance resulting not only from the long hours of work and large number of hotel activities that exist (Jeanette N.C, etal. 2007).*To emphasize the issues of straight shifts the participant stressed that"*

"as I told you workers dislike straight shifts even where they are given money they fell they need time off"

Participants' residence

The place of residence of the participants was established and the percentage responses are illustrated in Table 8.

Table 8: Showing participants' residence

		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	At the hotel	21	14.7	14.7	14.7
	Near the Hotel	40	28.0	28.0	42.7
	Far from the hotel	70	49.0	49.0	91.6
	Very far from the hotel	12	8.4	8.4	100.0
	Total	143	100.0	100.0	

From Table 8, 14.7% stay at the hotels, 28% stay near the hotels, 49.0% stay far from the hotels while 8.4% stay very far from the hotels. This suggests that most of the hotel employees in Fort Portal stay far from the hotels, fewer hotels provide accommodation for their workers.

The Working conditions in hotels of Fort Portal Tourism City.
Examining the working condition in the four medium hotels in Fort Portal Tourism City revealed that much is left to be desired to equate the working environment in these hotels as that which promotes work-life balance. The working conditions in these hotels is characterized insecure employment, straight shifts, discrimination, and mistreatment as revealed by the participants.
The results on respondents' opinions on the working conditions of the hotel industry in Fort Portal are illustrated in Table 9, 10, 11 and 12. The participants were asked to provide their opinions on each of the constructs on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1= strongly disagree (SD), 2= Disagree (D) =, 3 = Neutral (N), 4 = Agree (A) and 5 = Strongly Agree (SA).

Social protection within the hotels of Fort Portal City
The state of social protection of hotel workers in Fort Portal was established and the results are illustrated in Table 9.

Table 9: Showing responses on the state of social protection within hotels

	Frequencies (%)					Statistics	
	N	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
Social Protection								
The hotel always provides working contracts/appointments to workers	143	33	38	10	13	6	2.2	1.2
The workers in the hotel have a high level of Job security	143	28	46	7	19	0	2.1	1.0
The manager and the workers have a good relationship.	143	8	6	6	46	34	2.0	1.2
Due to cooperative nature of the coworkers, I do not face difficulties in my personal life.	143	23	0	11	28	38	2.5	1.3
The hotel contributes workers NSSF regularly	143	24	41	8	17	11	2.2	1.2

The response on the social protection with in hotels of Fort Portal City as illustrated in Table 11 indicate that most hotels workers (71%) generally disagree that hotels always provide them with working contracts or appointment. Only 19% of the respondents agreed that they are given working contracts in written form. This suggests that majority of the

hotels in Fort Portal do not provide their workers with written contracts; the workers are verbally employed. This situation paves a strong threat to the workers since they have no evidence of being employed. The consequence of this situation is a high level of job insecurity as reported by most of the respondents (74%), with only 19% indicating that they have a high level of job security in their hotels. These findings are also, supported by the responses from the participants interviewed;

One of the participants interviewed had this say:

"employees are not given contracts they are insecure"

In support to that another participant noted that:

"it is true very few of the workers have contracts, the reason our bosses give is that when workers are given contracts they misbehave thinking that they can't be easily dismissed and even when they are dismissed they have to be paid their benefits"

One of the participants accepted that workers are working under poor conditions and added on that:

"proprietors are after using the workers for the them to get their profits, they will always look for ways to reap out their investment"

However, the respondents indicated that there is a good relationship between them and their respective managers (64%), only 14% indicated that the managers and the workers have no good relation. This indicates that most workers in hotels have good working relationship with their managers. This is a good condition of work since it creates a conducive working environment for the workers. The good relationship between the manager and the work also explains why the responses also indicated that there is cooperation between the workers (64%). As reported due to this, workers find no difficulties in their personal lives. In contrast, the responses also, indicate that most hotels do not regularly contribute workers NSSF (65%) while only 28% indicated that the hotels regularly contribute their NSSF. One of the participant reiterated that:

"but what I hear in other hotels is that workers are not given time off and other benefits"

The findings on the working condition in hotels of Fort Portal City are supported by Muntaner, (2016) who also indicates that today's employment is irregular or nonstandard characterized by uncertainty in the duration of the labour contracts, psychological job insecurity, employment strain, low wages, lack of benefits, hazardous physical and psychological working conditions and absence of legal protection.

In justifying their neglect to worker's conditions another participant explained that:

"proprietors consider physical work, yet working in the hotel is both mentality and physical, so when they see that there is little physical work done compared to other works in other sectors like building and construction, they don't want to offer workers offs and shifts, because of this mentality many of the rights and benefits are not provided"

Remunerations within hotels of Fort Portal City
The responses on the state of remuneration in hotels of Fort Portal is illustrated in Table 10.

Table 10: Showing responses on the state of remunerations within hotels

	Frequencies (%)					Statistics	
	N	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
Remuneration								
The wage paid to workers is sufficient for their needs	143	33	38	11	13	6	2.2	1.2
The hotel provides other benefits to workers apart from the salary	143	28	42	7	23	0	2.2	1.1

The responses on remuneration in Table 10 indicate that most hotel workers feel that the wage paid to them by the hotels is not sufficient for them (71%) while very few workers (19%) feel that the wage paid to them is sufficient. Also, it was reported that very few hotels (23%) provide other benefits apart from the salary. One of the participants interviewed narrated that:

"workers work and they reach appoint of demotivation for instance, I joined in 2014 but my salary has never been increased or promoted but when they employ the new one for them are paid well yet we even do better than them"

This low pay to workers is what Thomas (2003) called the exploitative management of proprietors where that manager or owners of resources of production use them exploitatively to satisfy selfish interests at the expense of the needs of others (Lwanga et. al., 2020).

Flextime within hotels of Fort Portal City

The state of flextime in hotels of Fort Portal is illustrated in Table 11.

Table 11: Showing responses on the state of flextime within hotels

	Frequencies (%)					Statistics	
	N	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
Flextime								
The time of work at the hotel is favorable to workers	143	24	50	7	15	4	2.2	1.3
The hotel supports me to complete my duties on time	143	28	49	4	13	6	2.2	1.2
The hotel believes in having healthy work-life balance programs.	143	21	36	13	13	17	2.7	1.4
My hotel allows its employees to go on annual vacations/time off.	143	43	34	4	15	6	2.0	1.2
The hotel allows me to work from home when required.	143	32	25	16	23	4	2.4	1.3

Worker's responses on flextime in Table 11 indicate that the time of work at the hotels is not favorable to them (74%) while very few (19) indicated that the time of work at the hotel is favorable to workers. This means that most hotels do not provide flextime to workers. They work for long hours, work over nights, weekends and public holidays. Also as reported, very few hotels have working shifts but rather have straight shifts.

The participant contrasted straight shift to normal shifts by adding that:

"workers dislike straight shift which run from 7:00 am to 9:00Pm, these are so stressful but normal shifts are 8hourly and the work is given one day off"

To emphasize the issues of straight shifts the participant stressed that:

"as I told you workers dislike straight shifts even where they are given money they feel they need time off"

The responses in Table 11 further indicate that most hotels support their workers to complete their assigned work in times by providing relevant equipment and guidance. However, very few hotels (27%) believe in having healthy work-life balance. This was supported by another response that indicated that most hotels (77%) do not allow their employees to go on annual vacations or time off. Similarly, the hotels have no technology to allow workers work from their homes; this also, is due to the business nature of hotel which deals in physical services that require physical presence of workers at the hotels. This was also supported by the findings from the interviews where one of the participants interviewed had this say:

".......but in other hotels employees it is true they are not given time off and other requirement for them to perform"

Another participant also reiterated that: *"but what I hear in other hotels is that workers are not given time off and other benefits."*

The above state of work has a big impact on the work-life balance for workers working in the hotel industry. For example, according Luca (2014) as cited in Mullen, 2015), such working conditions bring about stress that manifests as physical complaints and emotional anxiety. Therefore, the existence of these precarious conditions justifies Gragnano et al.'s (2020) assentation that work that does not take into consideration of the welfare of the employee is not balanced work.

Work atmosphere within hotels of Fort Portal City

The state of work atmosphere in hotels of Fort Portal is illustrated in Table 12.

Table 12: Showing responses on the state of work atmosphere within hotels

		Frequencies (%)					Statistics	
	N	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
Work atmosphere								
I work in an environment that is supportive of my family and personal commitments.	143	28	36	4	21	11	2.5	1.4
The location of the hotel is favorable to workers	143	26	41	8	8	17	2.5	1.4
There is safety tools at the hotel to protect workers from injuries.	143	34	34	13	19	0	2.2	1.1

The responses on work atmosphere at the hotel in Table 12 indicated that most of the hotel workers (64%) generally disagreed that they work in an environment that is supportive of their family and personal commitments. Also, majority (67%) reported a disagreement that the location of the hotel is favorable to workers and most workers (68%) indicated a disagreement that there are safety tools at the hotel to protect them from injuries.

The results from the interview indicated that in addition there exits discriminations among some hotels based on nationality where Kenyans are favored against Ugandans. One of the participant interviewed emphasized pointed out that:

"Ugandan workers working in the hotel industry have they rights violated compared to the Kenyans working here in Uganda; you find Kenyans are given contract but Ugandan not; yet both are working in the same hotel"

This discrimination is attributed to the bad mentality of proprietors towards Ugandan workers and also the low bargaining power associated to lack of confidence among Ugandans. One of the participants noted that:

"the mentality proprietors have towards Ugandans against Kenyans; they think it is Kenyans who can manage a hotel and work better. But Ugandans also have low bargaining power and are not confident"

Irrespective of the observable evidence of the unfavorable working conditions within these hotels, manager and proprietors have to a certain extent justified this injustice of denying employees their work-related rights that manifests in decent working conditions. For instance, one of the participants explained that:

"the work is not so stressful because even the workers know it that is the nature of the work and that's what it demands; for instance on public holidays we're very busy"

He added on that:

"our staff are given incentives to compensate for these public holidays"

Using this argument of the nature of work as a justification for conditions like straight shift another participant narrated that:

"because the nature of work is designed in such a way that we are not busy all the time and so when there is some work or business they tend to work without shifts or offs"

Another participant tried to justify their practice of not offering employees other benefit apart from salary arguing that there is systematic theft organized by these workers, he narrated that:

"secondly workers steal a lot from the hotel and demotivates the proprietor to give them other benefits like medical care, for instance here we used to give them service charge, end of year party and medical coverage but these were suspended due theft"

However, this was challenged by another participant on grounds that:

"yes there could be theft in hotels but this is promoted by working conditions such as poor pay no access to advance, etc"

The findings from the study clearly stress that they workers work for long hours, are not given offs and work all days including public holidays. These findings are in agreement with what O'Neill and Follomer, (2020) concluded that employees in the hospitality industry work 24/7 for the hotels to run effectively. This situation therefore requires a

critical understanding and a framework of operating hotels while ensuring work life balance policies are put into play.

The extent to which the hotel working conditions affect personal life of employees in Fort Portal Tourism City.

Worker's satisfaction with his or her job is an important factor in the worker's life and this is not only through monetary payment but also the working environment through which he/she works under. The dissatisfying working conditions surrounding jobs within the hotel industry have devastating effect on lives of employees, these effect manifests in various form of psychological, physical, and emotional effects.

The effect of hotel working conditions on the life of employees in Fort Portal City was measured basing on self-effect, social and cultural effects and financial effects. The results on respondents' opinions are illustrated in Table 13,14 and 15 The participants were asked to provide their opinion by rating under each construct on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1= strongly disagree (SD), 2= Disagree (D) =, 3 = Neutral (N), 4 = Agree (A) and 5 = Strongly Agree (SA).

Self-effect of hotel working conditions to hotel workers

The responses on self-effect of hotel working conditions to hotel workers is illustrated in Table 13

Table 13: Showing respondents response on self-effect of hotel working conditions to hotel workers

	Frequencies (%)					Statistics	
	N	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
Self-effects								
I find it difficult to attend functions due to my duty schedule at work.	143	6	13	6	38	37	4.1	1.2
I think about work activities even when I am at home.	143	0	23	11	29	36	4.2	1.2
I am often preoccupied with office tasks even after I get home.	143	6	17	8	41	28	4.2	1.0
I often feel sleep-starved due to the amount of work that I have to do in a day.	143	13	17	13	32	25	4.3	1.2
I suffer from work related stress which manifests as physical ailments such as headaches, depression, blood pressure, etc.	143	0	11	8	39	43	4.5	1.4

Table 13 indicates that most of the hotel works (f = 75%, mean 4.1) find it difficult to attend functions due to their duty schedules at work. This means that most hotel workers are unable to attend social function such as birthdays, weddings and sometimes burials. This state greatly affects their personal life and personal relationship with other people. The results further indicate that most of the hotel workers (f = 65%, mean = 4.2) think about work activities while at home. Such work that totally conflicts with the workers

personal life defeats Delecta's (2011) definition of work life balance where an individual is able to meet work commitments as well as other non-work and family commitment.

Furthermore, the workers reported that they are preoccupied with hotel work even after they get to their homes; they find it difficult to attend functions due to their duty schedules at work. As a results respondent reported that they often feel sleep-starved due to amount of work that they have to do in a day (f = 57, mean = 4.3) and also, suffer from work related stress which manifests as physical ailments such as headaches, depression, blood pressure (f = 82%, mean = 4.5). Such working condition will in turn affect the total organization performance, as Bello and Tanko (2020) pointed out that Work life balances as an aspect that involves the welfare of employees' life in relation to their work requirements is of paramount importance in the attainment of the objectives of any organization.

The results in this section indicate that the hotel working conditions conflict with the personal life of the workers. The workers are unable to attend to their personal self-engagements due to the work schedules. The workers are therefore at cross roads between fulfilling the needs of the job and attending to self/personal activities. This has left the hotels with stressed and unmotivated workers; and it is important that a balance is created between work related activities and personal related activities as stressed by Mayo's human relations theory.

Social and cultural effect of hotel working conditions to hotel workers

The responses on social and cultural effect of hotel working conditions to hotel workers is illustrated in Table 14.

Table 14: Showing respondents response on Social and cultural effect of hotel working conditions to hotel workers

	Frequencies (%)					Statistics	
N	**SD**	**D**	**N**	**A**	**SA**	**Mean**	**SD**
Social and cultural effect							
My job requires me to work after working hours to complete my routine tasks. 143	0	15	11	34	41	3.9	1.0
Hotel work can only be done from the hotel, not remote working 143	6	8	13	49	24	4.0	1.0
As I have to spend more time in my work domain, I often fail to fulfill my family responsibilities. 143	17	13	8	32	30	4.2	1.1
I come home from work too late to look after personal/family roles. 143	0	10	15	35	41	4.5	1.5
Customers of my hotel are very demanding which requires me to spend more time at work. 143	0	15	10	36	40	3.9	1.0
The demands arising from my work make unable to attend social functions. 143	10	15	5	35	35	4.1	1.3

Table 14 indicates that the workers opinions on the social and cultural effect of hotel working conditions. The results in the table indicate that most of the workers (f = 75%,

mean = 3.9) worker beyond the working hours to complete the assigned duties. Also, hotel work can only be done at the hotel (f = 73%, mean = 4.0), with this, one has to spend more time in the work domain; which results into workers' failure to fulfill their family roles/duties (f = 76%, mean = 4.5). The results further indicate that the hotel customers are demanding which require workers to work for long hours and consequently fail to attend to other social and cultural roles and functions (f = 70%, mean = 4.1).

The results here reveal that there social and cultural effect exists among hotels due to the existing working conditions. Workers work for long hours, leave work very late and unable to attend important personal related functions. This situation results into a conflict between work related activities and non-work-related activities; which has a big effect on either activity; this emphasizes Khateeb's (2021) aeration that it is not easy to strike the balance between work and other domains of life.

Financial-effect of hotel working conditions to hotel workers.
Responses on the financial effect of hotel working conditions to hotel works in Fort Portal are shown on Table 15.

Table 15: Showing respondents response on financial-effect of hotel working conditions to hotel workers.

		Frequencies (%)					Statistics	
	N	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
Financial effects								
The wage paid is not enough to meet my personal needs.	143	0	15	10	50	25	4.0	1.0
Power, Position and Money define success to me.	143	10	10	10	35	35	4.3	1.3
To earn the salary in hotel one needs to forgo personal life	143	13	12	10	30	34	4.1	1.0
My duties at work leaves me with no time to engage in other income generating activities	143	15	15	3	30	37	4.2	1.3

Table 15 indicates the responses on the financial effect of the working conditions on hotel workers. The results suggest that majority of the hotel workers (f = 75%, mean = 4.0) feel that the wage paid is not enough to meet their personal needs; yet most respondents (f = 70%, mean = 4.3) feel that for one to earn a hotel salary, one has to forego personal life and other income generating activities (f = 67%, mean = 4.2). Though the salaries are low but it is deliberate as proprietors assume that employees are not supposed to be paid what is beyond their marginal productivity; hence salary paid is equivalent to their marginal

productivity of labour O'Hora (2018) as cited in (Lwanga et al., 2020). This kind of work in a hotel industry which is a time demanding job, yet the payment is still lower to be desired was foreseen by Standing (2011) who urged that uncertainties in the labour market and employment characterized by inflexible, unstable and short-term jobs without prospect for the future is common. There is a need to ensure that financial security is created with in the hotel industry. This is because according to Warren (2021) it will safeguard workers from having too much time in their jobs or from searching for additional jobs in order to make ends meet.

The challenges that have hampered the management of hotels from implementing work life policies and best practices.

The persistent poor working conditions characterizing hotels in Fort Portal Tourism City and the failure of manager and proprietors to address them is attributed to a number of factors which appear to be deliberate according the view of the participants. These deliberated factors include: negative attitude, bad mentality, weak laws and enforcement, family interference in the management of hotels and unqualified managers running these hotels.

Negative attitude and bad mentality: proprietor have got a bad mentality and attitude towards the people working in hotels and because of this thinking they have not taken the issues of decent work as important. Participant interviewed had this to say on the attitude and bad mentality of proprietor:

"however much they are informed by managers on the best practices, for them they already have a bad mentality towards the work and worker in the hotel industry"

Another participant stated that:

"the proprietor have a thinking that there are many people looking for jobs so they don't care of the working conditions, if you don't want to work you go and he/she will recruit another one"

Whereas another participant noted that:

"the proprietors have a negative attitude towards giving workers contracts, for instance me I joined in 2014 and I don't have a contract"

Similar to this attitude and mentality by the proprietors, there is a general negative attitude by almost every Ugandan viewing people working in hotels as failures, one of the participants noted that:

"in Uganda people working in the hotel industry are taken as failure unlike in Kenyan hotel industry, there is need to change the mindset"

Weak laws and enforcement: the existence of poor working conditions and the negligence by proprietor not to adhere best practice for decent work is attributed to weak laws and their enforcement by government. One of the participants explained this:

"this is caused by weak government policies that regulate the industry"

He added on that:

"proprietors don't allow worker to join unions and the same thing applies to the association of hotel owners little it has helped us it sideline with the proprietors"

He added on that:

"unions don't help because they defend wrong doers due to being corrupt"

Family interference in the management of hotels: managers argue that one of the reason as to why they are failing to implement best practices is the interference from the family members and also proprietors who always want to override them by run the hotels directly by themselves or by implanting relative to work along with the managers who sabotages them. The participants had this to say:

"there is a lot of family interference since hotels are family businesses, some staff become incontrollable because they are relative to the owners"

He added on that"

"there is interference from the family by passing the managers and proprietors want to run the hotel directly"

"proprietors are resistant to advise and don't believe in managers but they believe in customers"

Unqualified managers running these hotels: even though there is family interference and bad mentality and attitude by proprietors there is also a possibility that the managers employed to run hotels are not qualified enough and little that they know as far as decent work requirements. However this is also attributed the proprietor who prefer cheap labour, hence recruiting unqualified managers. The participant interviewed had this to say:

"proprietors don't respect professional employed to manage hotels"

He added;

"they don't want to be challenged they think they know it all, that's why despite hotels having good managers the services remain poor"

Another participant narrated that*:*

"so when they see these unqualified doing things then they don't see the reason of employing qualified people moreover these are cheap"………. "Proprietors and their unqualified managers are not informed well of the dynamics of the hotel industry"

Other challenges reported are classified into internal oriented and external oriented. Internal oriented challenges include; Conflicting interests between workers and hotel motive of profit making, communication gap between the manager and workers that leaves workers ignorant of their rights, the need to meet targets set, limited recourses to create policies that are supportive to WLB, inconsistence in understanding WLB policies by workers has hampered managers from implementing WLB policies and limited skills among workers in comparison to the demands of the hotel.

External oriented challenges include; Increased customer pressures for service provision alongside constant number of workers in some positions have difference in nature of work that does not allow exchange of work stations, perceptions of workers on the way of work and life, existing of informal policies that do not provide legal directions and the mobility of the hotel workers that leaves hotels with no permanent employees.

Conclusion

Basing on the study the following can be concluded:

The female persons are readily available to offer services in the hotel sector than their male counterparts, majority of the hotel workers are in the age bracket of 21-25 years, most of them are still single and they stay far from the hotels since very few hotels provide

accommodation to their workers. Also, most of the employees do not have any qualification related to hotel management but learn on the Job.

Most of the hotels in Fort Portal don't offer social protection of their employees. For example, hotels do not provide written contracts and contributing workers NSSF is still a challenge. Also, the remuneration of workers is undesirable, the wage paid is not sufficient for the workers needs and no other benefits given to workers apart from their salary. In addition, hotels do not provide flextime to workers, very few hotels have working shifts but rather most have straight shifts and there is some kind of discriminations among some hotels based on nationality.

The hotel working conditions conflict with the personal life of the workers; the workers are unable to attend to their personal self-engagements due to the work schedule. Also, there are social and cultural effect exists among hotels due to the existing working conditions. Working in a hotel is a time demanding job, yet the payment is still lower to be desired.

Managers are unable to implement work-life balance policies due to negative attitude, bad mentality, weak laws and enforcement, family interference in the management of hotels and unqualified managers running these hotels, conflicting interests between workers and hotel motive of profit making, communication gap between the manager and workers that leaves workers ignorant of their rights and existing of informal policies.

Recommendation

Though the study did not inquire into the solution to address the deteriorating workers conditions, the following issues need to be addressed that's: changing mindsets of proprietors, orientation and sensitization of workers and proprietors on the rights of workers, proprietor's handover management of hotels to companies, giving short contracts.

Areas for further research

Similarly to Dolai's (2015) recommendation for manager in the hotel industry to seek for ways maintaining an acceptable work-life balances; the study reiterate the same call with emphasis to Uganda's context on how managers and proprietors can lead to provision and access to decent working conditions and the correlation between the two.

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