# An Empirical Study on the Employee Perception on Work-Life Balance in Hotel Industry with Special Reference to Odisha

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### Abstract

Work Life Balance has become the buzz word in contemporary economic world as employees in industries are facing lot of pressure from work organisation and pressure from new social structure. Though the issues and problems are different in nature and influencing the life in different degree but, all industrial employees are facing the problem since liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation of economy. Hotel industry is distinguished from others in respect to provision of services round the clock. Due to the seasonal nature of hotel business and high attrition rate in the industry, it suffers from acute manpower shortage. Sometimes employees are compelled to take up the extra load by working for long hours .Such work environment may impact on the WLB of the employees since they do not get sufficient time for their personal and social commitments. This paper examines the key factors associated with work – life balance (WLB) and the employees perception towards it in Odisha, India. The study was conducted by selecting 100 professionals randomly from different Hotels in Bhubaneswar with the help of a structured questionnaire. Analysing the data, it was found that pressure of multiple roles, quality of health and ever changing and abnormal working schedules are the major factors contributing to poor Work Life Balance in hotel industry in Odisha.

**Keywords**: Attrition rate, Seasonal nature, Hospitality, Social commitments

## Introduction

The expression 'work-life balance' (WLB) was first used in the middle of 1970s to describe the balance between an individual's work and personal life (Newman & Matthews, 1999).

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In the present scenario, a vast majority of people seem to be working longer and harder than ever before and as a consequence are finding it ever more difficult to achieve a much desired work-life balance (Sturges & Guest, 2004). In particular, technological, structural, and demographic changes brought about in employment, together with greater than ever demand for more multiskilled and flexible 'knowledge workers' (Carnoy & Castells, 1997), are being allied with negative experiences of work such as involuntary contingent work and role overload. These experiences have been correlated directly and indirectly to the quality of family life (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), psychological well-being, and health (Cooper & Smith, 1985; Nolan, Wichert, & Burchell, 2000). A balance between work and life is supposed to exist when there is a proper functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict (Sturges & Guest, 2004). Therefore, the incompatibility between the demands from the work and non-work domain give rise to conflict and consequently, people experience a lack of work-life balance. There is confirmation of the fact that people entering the workforce today are laying emphasis on the importance of work-life balance more than their predecessors (Smola & Sutton, 2002). In spite of this, the extent to which this balance is being achieved is far less than what is desired. In fact, researches bring to mind that graduates are being drawn into situations where they have to work for progressively more long hours and so experience an increasingly unsatisfactory balance between home life and work life (Sturges & Guest, 2004). From the perspectives of employees, WLB is the maintenance of a balance between responsibilities at work and at home. According to Edmund Heery & Noon (2008), "Work-life balance is the principle that paid employment should be integrated with domestic life and community involvement in the interests of personal and social well-being." In the words of Julie Morgenstern, "Work-life balance is not about the amount of time you spend working versus not-working. It's more about how you spend your time working and relaxing, recognizing that what you do in one fuels your energy for the other.

Balancing the demands of the workplace and a personal life is an important issue across industries. As more workers are being forced to work round the clock, modern society is being defined as 'the 24 hour society' (Kauppinen, 2001; Merrlie, & Paoli, 2001). 'Round the Clock' work entails night work, evening work and work on a shift basis. While regulations may define how long we can work they cannot define the schedule of work. The implications which working time arrangements may have on the social and personal life of individuals as well on the viability of the firm have attracted the attention of social analysts (Kauppinen, 2001; Jacobs & Gerson, 2001).

Hotel employees are being faced with long working hours, heavy workload shift duties and handling demanding and difficult customers has become a take-for-granted phenomenon in the hospitality industry (Hsieh et al., 2004;Sarabahksh et al., 1989).This has a consequential impact on their individual lives, as well as on their respective families. People have difficulty working in different roles or even multiple roles (as a supervisor in work, a parent at home, a child helping elderly parents in Odisha cultural context) which leads to stress (Grandey and Cropanzano, 1999).The resultant stress that hotel employees experience is associated to work and family conflicts (Wong & Ko, 2009). The issue of work -life balance has received much attention, and the different actors and participants in different industries are gradually becoming aware of practices for balancing work and life (Wong & Ko, 2009). It can be particularly difficult to achieve "work -life balance" in industries where non -traditional hours and unusual schedules are the norm. Hospitality has historically been one such industry. There are many cases that suggest that work–life balance assists in retention, productivity and the recruitment of good staff (Evans and Vernon, 2007; Pocock, 2005).

History of Odisha, which acquired indelible fame and glory under its past names 'Kalinga' and 'Utlkal', dates back to very remote antiquity. Tourism is an important element of the state. The State has virtually all the facets of tourist interest. From the time immemorial the State is famous for religious tourism. This city by the sea has one of the largest sandy beaches of India that attracts tourists from all over the country and abroad. In order to meet the growing demand of tourists for accommodation, Government of Odisha accorded industrial status to the hotel sector for the first time in the country so as to attract investors to increase the capacity of hotel rooms and beds at tourist centers in 1980. The importance of hotel industry for creating different categories of employment was duly endorsed and government provided land and financial support for the hotelier like Oberoi, Taj, Swosti, Prachi group of hotels and other entrepreneurs to build all categories of hotel in the state. In 1985 the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Orissa (HRAO) was established which is the largest body made up of tour operators and travel agents, travel trade owners and professionals' hotels and tourism educational institutions in Odisha. The members of the association operate in close cooperation with each other with one common motive of promotion of tourism industry of Odisha. The Trade and Hotel industry sector has been growing consistently since 1950-51. So the growth of tourism depends on the development of hotel industry.

From 1999 to 2009, the number of hotel rooms has grown at an annual rate of 6 percent, and number of tourists visiting the State has grown at the rate of 10 percent. It, therefore, follows that the growth of this sector and its contribution to the tourist sector is founded on higher rate of capacity utilization. Subsequently, there has been a noticeable uplift in demand for talent in the hotel industry.  Hoteliers in Odisha are facing increased turnover and poor retention. Well managed human resource, one of the major factors for organizational success, should be taken care of (Malik, Saleem and Ahmad, 2010). In the era of organizational restructuring it is important for the organizations to take care of their efficient employees. It is evident that the organizations which take care of their employees by providing them work life balance facilities generally have a greater numbers of satisfied employees (Malik, Ahmad & Hussain, 2010).

Presently with such background, hotel industry has owed its importance for tourism business and attracts large number of skilled employees. So, in order to make them effective and efficient in their role and position the study of WLB carries its value for HR practitioner.

**Review of Literature**

Lowe (2007) explained that meeting of stimulating trends in the early 21st century has enabled employers to re-think their human resources strategies. As such, it is not merely coincidence to transform work-life balance strategies as strategic focus in business and public policy priority. The trends and challenges, to mention a few, are as follows: the aging workforce, increased labour market competition, advancement in information technology, and rising costs associated with employee benefits. These have created new frontiers for employers to attain organizational performance aims without setting aside workers' personal aspirations Lowe (2007). As indicated and reported in The Human Solutions Report (Lowe, 2007), a sizeable number of employees are suffering from an imbalanced and sunken work-life quality. The same report has documented that dual-earner families have escalated over the course of time while the job performance expectations have also increased. Thus, work-life balance has become both a dream and a mission to achieve. In this vein, both parties – the employers and employees – have to meet midway and together and explore ways under which work and life quality can be addressed.

The term work-life balance has now evolved to encompass not only what can be described as 'family-friendly policies' but including those policies which take into account the wide implications of family responsibilities. Nowadays, work-life balance pertains to policies such as flexible working arrangements that bestow upon the employees working provisions that will be able to strike a balance in both responsibilities at work and at home. (Redmond, Valiulis, & Drew, 2006). In this light, work-life balance is defined as "a satisfactory level of involvement or 'fit' between the multiple roles in a person's life," and it linked with the concept of equilibrium, that "maintaining an overall sense of harmony in life" (Clarke, Koch & Hill, 2004). Furthermore, it concerns about the analysis of the capability of the employees for instance, to "manage simultaneously the multi-faceted demands of life" (Hill, Hawkins, Ferris & Weitzman, 2001; Marks, Huston, Johnson & Mac Dermid, 2001; Tausig & Fenwick, 2001). Moreover, it refers to "the stability characterized by the balancing of an individual's life complexity and dynamism with environmental and personal resources such as family, community, employer, profession, geography, information, economics, personality, or values" (Crooker et al, 2002: 389). Pillinger (as cited in Redmond et al., 2006) declared that the term 'work-life balance' is more favoured because both parents and non-parents are given due consideration, with respect to their needs and experiences.

Furthermore, Pillinger elucidated theoretical framework is more progressive or an 'out-of-the box' approach because it considered a whole new interpretation and description of the phenomenon of living and working, and the different actors have come to an agreement that in reality, work-life balance encompasses "adjusting work patterns so that everyone, regardless of age, race or gender can find a rhythm that enables them more easily to combine work and their other responsibilities and aspirations." Different authors have attempted to explain and emphasized the interconnection of work and personal life in the organization setting, namely: (1) "the *compensation effect* implies that employees tend to compensate for low work or personal life satisfaction by seeking contentment in the other domain"; and (2) "the *spill-over view* that indicates that job satisfaction spills over into one's work life and vice versa." (Bruck Allen & Spector, 2002; Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly & Konopaske, 2006). Gibson et al. (2006: 197-198).

The study of Greenhaus, Collins &R., & Parasuraman, S. (1997).(as cited in "The Case for Work/Life Balance", 2005) explored and measured three aspects of work-life balance namely: (1) Time balance, which concerns the amount of time given to work and non-work roles; (2) Involvement balance, meaning the level of psychological involvement in, or commitment to, work and non-work roles; and (3) satisfaction balance, or the level of satisfaction with work and non-work roles. The hospitality industry has confronted vital economic and workforce challenges since bursting into the 21st century. Success in braving these challenges will depend on the ability of the industry's stakeholders to come together and solve their common problems (Bernhardt, Dresser & Hatton, 2003). Margaret Deery, (2008), examined the key issues associated with work-life balance (WLB) with a particular focus on practices within the tourism industry. It provides an overview of the general literature and then the research that relates specifically to WLB in the tourism industry. Margaret Deery, (2008), provided an overview of the key employee turnover literature within the hospitality and tourism industry for those academics researching in this area, with specific attention given to the role of WLB issues in the turnover decision-making process. Cullen and McLaughlin (2006) argue that the culture of hotels promotes this phenomenon, which is ultimately detrimental to gaining a WLB.

Research by Doherty (2004) in examining WLB for women in the hospitality industry found that it were the very long hours and the lack of flexibility that deterred women from seeking senior levels. Doherty found that 'a male model of a career based on commitment in higher risk of short-term and long-term harm than most other workers. In an earlier study by Larsen (1994) ,however, factors such as the hospitality industry ' sustainable working hours, low emotional support and the number and type of customer interactions, some of which are confrontational, were seen as contributors to drinking both on duty and after work. The role that stress plays in the abuse of alcohol by hospitality employee's is confirmed by Ross (2005), and he highlights the impact that this has on the employee's intention to leave the industry. It is the work by Karatepe and Uludag (2007) on work – life conflict, exhaustion and motivation in the hotel industry; however that is critical to the development of a frame work on WLB in the tourism and hospitality industries. These authors found that frontline employees in the hotel industry 'who had difficulty in spending time with their family and / or social commitments as a result of their job-related responsibilities were more susceptible to elevated levels of emotional exhaustion' (p. 661).

The study also found that the increased emotional exhaustion experienced by the frontline hotel employees due to a number of problems faced including irregular work schedules, the long working hours and heavy workloads increased their intentions to leave the organisation. Similarly, research by Netemeyer *et al* (2004) found that work – life conflict increased employees' intention to leave, thereby creating greater stress levels for those left in the work environment. Therefore, the concept of Work Life Balance is a core issue that must be explored as to reduce employee turnover and suggest an appropriate strategy to the HR Manager of Hotels to attract the best talent.

## Objectives

1. To identify the factors influencing employees work- life in hotel industry.
2. To study the relationship between WLB and employee satisfaction.
3. To find out the measures taken by the hotels to balance the work-life.

**Hypothesis I:** The Work Life Balance influence employee satisfaction

## Methodology

The study relies on both secondary and primary data. The secondary data sources are publications of the tourism industry available from multiple sources including books, journals, brochures, reports, and the Internet. The primary data were gathered from of the classified hotels of Odisha.

## Samples

A sample survey of 100 numbers of respondents from 10 classified hotels was taken. A total of 100 questionnaires were initially administered.

## Measurement

The variables of factors contributing to poor work- life balance was measured in 5 point Likert Scale format ranging from 1- 'Strongly Disagree' to 5 'Strongly Agree'.

## Method of Analysis

Prior to hypothesis testing, Factor analysis was initially undertaken for the study using a co-variance Matrix as input to test the factors to evaluate the distinctiveness of the measures used in this study. The research hypotheses were subsequently tested using Regression Analysis.

## Profile of the Respondents

One hundred valid respondents were taken from10 classified hotels in Odisha who are in full-time employment. Employees are assigned in different departments such as front desk, concierge, restaurant, kitchen, conferences, housekeeping, and others. A summary of the demographic profile of respondents is presented in tables in the following paragraphs.

## Gender

### Table 1: Gender Profile of Respondents

|            | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| Male       | 65        | 65%        |
| Female     | 35        | 35%        |
| Total      | 100       | 100%       |

The above result shows that 65 percent of the respondents are male while 35 per cent are female. Thus, majority of the respondents are male. It is a common fact that the women in Odisha, especially the poor work from dawn to dusk inside and outside the household, as wage earners or as housewives (which is unpaid for and unrecognized).The contribution of this significant segment of the state's human resources is by no means negligible but has gone largely unnoticed

As shown in the results, there are more men who are working in hotels than women So, their access to work opportunities continues to be poor, with their work confined mainly to the marginalized sectors.

**Education**

### Table-II: Educational Background of the Respondent

|                                        | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|----------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| **Elementary**                         | 0         | 0          |
| **High School**                        | 8         | 8          |
| **Vocational**                         | 25        | 25         |
| **Diploma/ Degree in Hotel Managemer** | 52        | 52         |
| **Master' Degree**                     | 15        | 15         |
| **Others**                             | 0         | 0          |
| **Total**                              | **100**   | **100**    |

The above result shows that 8 percent of the respondents were High school graduates; 25 per cent did Vocational courses; 52% were Diploma/Bachelor's Degree in Hotel Management; and the remaining 15 per cent were Master's Degree holder. Majority of the respondents were Bachelor's degree holders while minorities of the respondents were High school graduates.

**Age**

### Table III: Age of the Respondent

|                  | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|------------------|-----------|------------|
| **20 or Below**  | 10        | 10         |
| **21-25**        | 15        | 15         |
| **26-30**        | 20        | 20         |
| **31-35**        | 30        | 30         |
| **36-40**        | 15        | 15         |
| **41 and Above** | 10        | 10         |
| **Total**        | 100       | 100        |

The above result shows that 10 percent of the respondents are 20 years old and/or below; 15 per- cent belong to 21-25 age bracket; 20 per cent are in 26-30 years bracket; 30 percent have the ages from 31 to 35 years; 15 percent are 36 to 40 years old; and 10 percent of the respondents are 41 years old or above. Majority of the respondents are in 31-35 years old bracket.

**Marital Status**

### Table III: Marital Status of the Respondent

|  | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|---|---|---|
| Married | 77 | 77 |
| Single | 23 | 23 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

The above table shows that summary of the marital status of the respondents. The results constitute that of 77 percent of respondents are married while 23 percent are single. The results suggest the finding that majority of the respondents are married which highlights that the number of dual-career couples continuous are continually increasing and as such, work- life balance have become areas of concern not just for employers but in society in general

**Children**

### Table IV: No. of Children of the Respondent

|  | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1-5 | 45 | 50 |
| 6-10 | 43 | 38 |
| 11 or Above | 12 | 12 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

The above result shows that 45 percent of the respondents have 1 to 5 children and 38 per cent have 6 to 10 children. Majority of the respondents have 1 to 5 children and minority of the respondents have 6 to 10 children. Williams & Boushey (2010) indicated that inflexible workplaces that have unpredictable schedules make accessing quality and affordable childcare nearly impossible.

**Work Shift**

### Table V: Working Shifts of the Respondents

|  | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|---|---|---|
| Day Shift | 75 | 75 |
| Night Shift | 25 | 25 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

The above result shows that 75 per cent of the respondents are reporting to work on a day shift while 25 percent attend to work on a night shift basis. The majority of the respondents work on a day shift, while minority of the respondents report on a night shift. Working shifts can have negative health effects, and complicate the scheduling of family activities. Additionally, because shift work is rarely restricted to weekdays, finding child care on weekends or making plans for holidays and social activities can be difficult.

## Type of Family Structure

### Table VI: Family Structure of the Respondent

|  | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|---|---|---|
| Joint Family | 20 | 20 |
| Nuclear Family | 80 | 80 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

The above result shows that 80 percent of the respondents are from nuclear family and 20 per -cent of the respondents are from joint family. Aside from the childcare responsibilities of the respondents, majority of the respondents have nuclear family that fall upon and are considered an added responsibility. Undoubtedly, the results suggest that having nuclear family members cast an additional burden or constraint in the fulfillment of the roles of the employees as couples at home and in the family and they will have to pay and provide for other household services.

## Factor Analysis

Principal Component (Factor) Analysis

The study has employed principal component analysis or factor analysis to factor analyse 10 factors. In order to prepare the dataset for factor analysis at different stages of test exercise, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's test of sphericity were principally considered. As shown in Table VII, the factor pressure of multiple roles registered the highest factor loading value of 0.705.

## Table VII: Total Variance Explained

| Component | Initial Eigenvalues | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 2.249 | 22.494 | 22.494 | 2.249 | 22.494 | 22.494 |
| 2 | 1.316 | 13.157 | 35.652 | 1.316 | 13.157 | 35.652 |
| 3 | 1.309 | 13.090 | 48.741 | 1.309 | 13.090 | 48.741 |
| 4 | 1.178 | 11.783 | 60.524 | 1.178 | 11.783 | 60.524 |
| 5 | .924 | 9.236 | 69.760 | | | |
| 6 | .841 | 8.407 | 78.167 | | | |
| 7 | .697 | 6.973 | 85.140 | | | |
| 8 | .673 | 6.731 | 91.872 | | | |
| 9 | .513 | 5.127 | 96.999 | | | |
| 10 | .300 | 3.001 | 100.000 | | | |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

In Table No. VII it was clearly shown that out of ten variables of WLB factors only four factors were extracted.

## Table VIII: Component Matrix[a]

| | Component | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1.Ever changing and abnormal working schedule | **.474** | .377 | .627 | -.155 |
| 2. Physical stress | -.319 | .472 | -.308 | -.397 |
| 3. Uncerainty of work | .195 | -.036 | .065 | .777 |
| 4. Elderly child care issues | -.691 | -.158 | -.106 | .052 |
| 5. Health Hazard | **.438** | -.550 | .267 | -.214 |
| 6. High attrition rate | -.619 | .042 | .540 | -.064 |
| 7. Pressure of Mutiple roles | **.705** | .411 | -.026 | .091 |
| 8. Lack of social support | .149 | -.021 | .547 | .273 |
| 9. Time Management | **.678** | -.174 | .082 | -.312 |
| 10. Manpower shortage | .066 | .648 | -.368 | .242 |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
a. 4 components extracted.

Among the extracted factors Pressure of multiple roles was the most significant factor for work life balance, followed by ever changing abnormal schedule, Health hazard and Time management is the least significant factor. 6 factors were deleted as factor loading values were less than 0.5.

To examine the relationship between several independent or predictor variables and a dependent or criterion variable, Linear Regression was conducted. As a rule, the degree to which two or more predictors (independent or $X$ variables) are related to the dependent ($Y$) variable was expressed in the correlation coefficient $R$, which was the square root of *R-square.* In linear regressions, $R$ assumed values between 0 and 1.

**Table IX: Model Summary**

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .318[a] | .101 | .064 | .516 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Factors like  (Ever changing and abnormal working schedule, Pressure of Mutiple  roles ,  Health Hazard, Time Management)

**Table X: ANOVA[a]**

| Model | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Regression | 2.856 | 4 | .714 | 2.681 | .036[b] |
|  | Residual | 25.304 | 95 | .266 |  |  |
|  | Total | 28.160 | 99 |  |  |  |

a. Dependent Variable: Job satisfaction
b. Predictors: (Constant), Factors like  (Ever changing and abnormal working schedule, Pressure of Mutiple  roles ,  Health Hazard, Time Management)

**Table XI: Coefficients[a]**

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | Con stant | -.307 | .771 | | -.399 | .691 |
| | Factor 1 | .014 | .124 | .013 | .110 | .913 |
| | Factor 2 | -.205 | .111 | -.199 | -1.840 | .069 |
| | Factor 3 | .054 | .087 | .067 | .619 | .537 |
| | Factor 4 | .456 | .160 | .289 | 2.859 | .005 |

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Job satisfaction

It was found from the Table X that, since the p-value was .03 which was less than .05 indicating that the regression is statistically significant. The relationship between employee job satisfaction and work life balance practiced by the employers was significant. From Table IX in the correlation coefficient, R was 0.318. Therefore, we can conclude that employee job satisfaction is positively influenced by WLB practiced by the employers.

Table XI represented the Beta (β) values as well as its correlation among identified variables. Factors like ever changing and abnormal working schedule, Health Hazard, Pressure of Multiple roles and Time Management were taken as independent variables while the employee's job satisfaction, as dependent variable. Pressure of Multiple role, Ever changing and abnormal working schedule, Health Hazard exerted positive co-relation with the dependent variable. The hotel industry is concerned about the issue related to WLB of its employees; however, the measures taken to improve the situation are not very effective. Adopting an employee-centric and integrative approach are the critical success factors for implementation of a work–life balance program.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The results as summarized that employees of star category hotels in Odisha had experiences of pressure of multiple role, ever changing and abnormal working schedule, health hazard which impacted positively on their satisfaction. The human resource management has an important role to play in deciding where flexibility can make the optimum contribution.

It is suggested that consideration be given to the development of guidelines in order to ensure that working hours should not affect the WLB of employees. Flexible work policies need to be integrated into the overall strategic plan of the organisation. As the literature shows, management support is necessary for effective work-life balance programmes, this need to be reflected in a positive organisational culture. The workplace must be responsive to employee needs. Effective training can be used as a tool to help the employees manage stress and handle multiple roles effectively. The labour force is becoming more diverse. Flexible working arrangements are becoming important aspect of quality of working life for many employees. In order to obtain optimal return on staff it is important to understand the interplay between work and family. Managers need to acknowledge that there are work-life balance issues that affect the quality of work. Adopting an employee-centric and integrative approach are the critical success factors for implementation of a work–life balance program. The overall cost of replacing an employee involves recruitment, selection, training and some aspects. It may make more business sense to accommodate the employee's work demands, rather than lose all that talent and skills. Tourism industry being an employment multiplier and Hotel being an important component of tourism, needs better HR practice in order to retain and utilize the talent by balancing work and life situation. So, the study can be considered a frame work for HR policy and practice in Hotel Industry. However, more research in the field will bring the accuracy in result.

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