



Work–leisure conflict and its consequences: Do generational differences matter?

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ABSTRACT

Work–leisure conflict in employees' personal lives causes negative attitudes and behaviors. However, few studies have concentrated on the consequences of work–leisure conflict. This research investigated leisure satisfaction, psychological well-being, and job satisfaction as they related to such conflict. The moderating influences of generational differences on the associations between work–leisure conflict and these three consequences were also examined. Survey data were collected from 363 employees of the tourism and hospitality industry in Taiwan. The findings demonstrated that work-to-leisure conflict negatively affects leisure satisfaction, psychological well-being, and job satisfaction. Leisure-to-work conflict is negatively related to job satisfaction. Furthermore, generational differences moderate the relationships of work-to-leisure conflict–leisure satisfaction, work-to-leisure conflict–psychological well-being, work-to-leisure conflict–job satisfaction, and leisure-to-work conflict–job satisfaction. Implications for management and future research are discussed.

1. Introduction

As a result of behavioral changes among consumers in recent years, people have become wealthier and have more time to participate in leisure activities. Balancing work and leisure roles has thus become crucial. Work–leisure conflict is receiving growing attention in both the academic and business spheres (Knecht, Wiese, & Freund, 2016; Simmons, Mahoney, & Hambrick, 2016). Work–leisure conflict refers to a type of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from work and leisure roles are mutually incompatible in certain respects, including work-to-leisure conflict and leisure-to-work conflict (Tsaur, Liang, & Hsu, 2012). Thus, there are effects in both directions between work and leisure. Service employees in the tourism and hospitality industry have considerable working time demands, irregular scheduling, and atypical working hours; as a result, employees in these industries often do not have sufficient time and energy for leisure activities. Under these circumstances, employees usually experience strong conflict between work and leisure roles. Working in the tourism and hospitality industry itself results in a tendency for more of this conflict because of the nature of the employment (Lin, Huang, Yang, & Chiang, 2014; Lin, Wong, & Ho, 2015). Reichl, Leiter, and Spinath (2014) found that individuals who experience such interference are more apt to feel depressed; suffer from strain and stress, and; and be less satisfied with their work, family,

and overall life. Leisure is critical part of human life. Work–life balance corresponds to the absence of work–life conflict and indicates satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum amount of role conflict (Clark, 2000). Ensuring employees' work–life balance has become one of the most critical managerial strategies for maintaining employees' performance and retaining employees (Deery & Jago, 2015). Therefore, an attempt to understand and manage the negative effects of work–leisure conflict is critical in the tourism and hospitality contexts.

Tourism and hospitality scholars have demonstrated that work–leisure conflict has a crucial effect on both the work and nonwork domains, affecting an employee's leisure satisfaction and job satisfaction (Lin, Wong, & Ho, 2013; Lin et al., 2015). Leisure satisfaction refers to the positive feelings after an individual engages in leisure and job satisfaction is an individual's affective response to his or her work (Beard & Ragheb, 1980; O'Brien & Allen, 2008). When employees are excessively engaged in jobs, they spend less time on leisure activities, thereby preventing them from satisfying the need for relaxation and causing lower leisure satisfaction and greater dissatisfaction with their work (Lin et al., 2013; Rice, Frone, & McFarlin, 1992). Previous studies have concluded that participating in leisure activities can create leisure satisfaction, generating positive feelings and increasing psychological well-being (Gilbert & Abdullah, 2004; Lloyd & Little, 2010).

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Psychological well-being is an individual's overall assessment of life quality, which can be affected by work-to-leisure conflict (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Therefore, work-to-leisure conflict may be negatively associated with leisure satisfaction, psychological well-being, and job satisfaction.

Leisure-to-work conflict may also occur. Staines and O'Connor (1980) described how high levels of leisure-to-work conflict can result from frequent participation in leisure activities and scheduled events such as concerts, plays, movies, or parties, reducing the amount of time and energy devoted to work. Previous studies have demonstrated that role overload is negatively associated with leisure satisfaction (Brown, Brown, & Powers, 2001; Pearson, 2008). In other words, when leisure interferes with work roles, it reduces personal leisure satisfaction. When employees are less involved in work, it is more difficult for them to complete their work smoothly, leading to lower job satisfaction (Zopiatis, Constanti, & Theocharous, 2014). Furthermore, when people experience family interference with work, psychological stress increases (Burke & Greenglass, 1999; Janzen, Muhajarine, & Kelly, 2007). Stress in family roles induces negative emotions, in turn reducing psychological well-being (Parasuraman & Simers, 2001; Rantanen, Kinnunen, Feldt, & Pulkkinen, 2008). Based on the aforementioned studies, leisure-to-work conflict may be negatively related to leisure satisfaction, psychological well-being, and job satisfaction. However, these relationships cannot be determined from the existing literature.

Generation differences have been the focus of considerable attention in the tourism and hospitality field over the last decade (Gursoy, Chi, & Karadag, 2013; Lu & Gursoy, 2016). Studies have demonstrated that generational differences are likely to influence the value that hospitality employees place on their work (King, Murillo, & Lee, 2017; Park & Gursoy, 2012). Different generations have different personal traits, values, attitudes, and behavioral models (Twenge, 2010). Distinct generational characteristics may cause differences in how individuals value and perceive their jobs, and such differences may result in variations in work–leisure conflict as well as its influence on leisure satisfaction, psychological well-being, and job satisfaction. Although previous studies have focused on the effects of work-to-leisure conflict on job and leisure satisfaction (Lin et al., 2013, 2015) and well-being (Lin et al., 2014), few studies have explored these relationships from the perspective of leisure-to-work conflict. Furthermore, no study has addressed the contingent influences of generational differences on these relationships. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to examine the relationships among work–leisure conflict, leisure satisfaction, psychological well-being, and job satisfaction, as well as to elaborate the moderating effect of generational differences.

2. Literature review and hypotheses

2.1. Work–leisure conflict and leisure satisfaction

Work–leisure conflict is a mental pressure triggered by the struggle to balance work and life; it reduces the time and chance for leisure activities because of the demands of work roles and work hours (Lin et al., 2014). Tsaaur et al. (2012) identified two directions of work–leisure conflict, namely work-to-leisure conflict and leisure-to-work conflict, and three types of work–leisure conflict, namely time-, strain-, and behavior-based conflicts. Time-based work–leisure conflict occurs when the time engaged in a work (or leisure) role makes it hard to perform the requirements of a leisure (or work) role. Strain-based work–leisure conflict occurs when strain induced by a work (or leisure) role makes it hard to execute the requirements of a leisure (or work) role, and behavior-based work–leisure conflict occurs when specific behaviors required in a work (or leisure) role make it hard to perform the requirements of a leisure (or work) role. Based on scarcity theory, individuals who assume both work and leisure roles nonetheless have only a fixed amount of time and energy (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Under these circumstances, they inevitably experience work-to-leisure conflict and leisure-to-work conflict because of the allocation of greater

resources to one role rather than the other (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003).

Pearson (2008) found that the role overload of employees was negatively associated with leisure satisfaction. Freedom is an element of leisure; when individuals feel that they have little or no freedom, they may experience dissatisfaction with leisure activities (Ellis & Witt, 1986). For example, service employees often work long hours with irregular scheduling, and may have difficulty arranging for free time after work, thus decreasing their ability to enjoy leisure activities. A primary aim of leisure is to obtain relaxation by doing something non-work-related. However, individuals have difficulty doing this when they carry their job stress and tense emotions over into leisure activities. Work-to-leisure conflict is a type of role overload that emphasizes that the existence of one role elevates the strain and load experienced in another (Tsaaur et al., 2012). Within role theory, the scarcity hypothesis (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000) proposes that the amount of time and energy that individuals have is constant. Consistent with the scarcity perspective, satisfaction in the work domain requires sacrifices in the leisure domain. Because participation in personal leisure activities is reduced to fulfil job responsibilities, the time and energy that people spend on leisure activities are insufficient. Consequently, work-to-leisure conflict reduces leisure satisfaction (Lin et al., 2013, 2015). This research proposes the following hypothesis:

H1a. Employees' work-to-leisure conflict is negatively related to leisure satisfaction.

Conflict arises between work and leisure when an individual's pursuit of one role increases stress or overload in another role (Tsaaur et al., 2012). Pearson (2008) used full-time female employees as a case study to prove the negative correlation between role overload and leisure satisfaction. In other words, both work-to-leisure conflict or leisure-to-work conflict produce role overload, which may reduce personal leisure satisfaction. Spillover theory proposes that an individual's emotions and behaviors in one domain can carry over into other domains (Staines, 1980). Work experiences have ripple effects on any areas of life outside of the workplace and thus affects an individual's attitude and behavior. Leisure participation can interfere with work life under some circumstances. For instance, when individuals believe they are excessively involved in leisure activities, work progress may be affected by the resultant exhaustion or stress (Tsaaur et al., 2012). An individual may become dissatisfied with their leisure arrangements or participation, in turn reducing leisure satisfaction. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H1b. Employees' leisure-to-work conflict is negatively related to leisure satisfaction.

2.2. Work–leisure conflict and psychological well-being

Parasuraman, Greenhaus, and Granrose (1992) indicated that role conflict is a type of life stress that may result in a negative perception of psychological well-being. The negative influences of a role conflict between work and leisure have physical, mental, and social aspects (Lin et al., 2013). Conservation of resources (COR) theory postulates that individuals seek to acquire and maintain resources (Hobfoll, 1989). Resources can be objects, conditions, personal characteristics, or types of energy. According to COR theory, individuals lose their limited resources if they juggle both work and leisure roles. A study on the hospitality and tourism industry discovered that work-to-leisure conflict produces job burnout when an employee has difficulty simultaneously playing work and leisure roles (Mansour & Tremblay, 2016). Burnout occurs when resources are lost in the process of managing both work and leisure roles. Furthermore, individuals with scarce resources are less likely to resolve work and leisure problems and have lower levels of psychological well-being. Thus, Lin, Huang, et al. (2014) and Lin, Wong, et al. (2014) found that work–leisure conflict positively associated with job burnout and negatively impacts employees' well-

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