



# Work–leisure conflict and its associations with well-being: The roles of social support, leisure participation and job burnout<sup>☆</sup>



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## HIGHLIGHTS

- The consequences of Work Leisure Conflict (WLC) for both leisure and work are analyzed.
- WLC positively affects job burnout and negatively affects leisure participation and well-being.
- Both leisure participation and job burnout have mediating effect between WLC and well-being.
- Social support is a moderator in the full model.

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## ABSTRACT

In hospitality and tourism industries employees, work–leisure conflict (WLC) resulting from job characteristics can affect work attitudes and personal life. This study revealed that social support has moderating effects on the relationships among work–leisure conflict, leisure participation, job burnout and well-being. Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis of 488 valid questionnaires collected from a sample of employees in the hospitality and tourism industries showed that (1) WLC positively affects job burnout and negatively affects leisure participation and well-being; (2) leisure participation is positively associated with well-being, but burnout is negatively associated with well-being; (3) leisure participation and job burnout have mediating roles in the full model; (4) social support is a moderator in the full model. The analytical results of the study provide a reference for managing employees in the hospitality and tourism industries.

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## Value

This study of hospitality and tourism industries employees investigated the relationships among work–leisure conflict, leisure participation, job burnout and well-being and to discuss the moderating role of social support, the main theoretical and practical value as follows.

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Firstly, the academic value: over the past research mainly oriented to explore the causes of its employees in the negativity of work based on the work–leisure conflict (WLC) and job burnout theory. This study also examined the influence of the leisure participation on the related negative emotions at work, and analyzed with the point of view of well-being, in expectation to combine these theories that affects work psychology and leisure behaviors of the hospitality and tourism industries practitioners and to improve the integrity of the mode.

Secondly, the practical value: the researchers observed work characteristics of hospitality and tourism practitioners about the negative psychological factors caused by anti-social work phenomenon. As shown in the phenomenon of practice, leisure participation can reduce negative emotions, and enhance the well-being to help the human resources department and employees of the hospitality and tourism industries in planning their

lifestyles which affect their work, family and quality of life, and are beneficial for the individual's continuation of their work and career development.

In the end, the study points out how academic researchers can be inspired by the framework and what contribution can be made to practitioners.

## 1. Introduction

A hospitality and tourism career is labor-intensive, and frontline personnel face huge demands. When customers are spending their leisure time touring, shopping *etc.*, tourism employees must function as service providers (Wong & Lin, 2007). This contrast is known as anti-social work hours (Law, Pearce, & Woods, 1995). Frone, Russell, and Cooper (1992) also indicated that, for employees in this industry, personal time and energy demands often conflict between work and non-work activities. Many studies have analyzed the effects of work on family and the effects of family on work (Kinnunen, Vermulst, Gerris, & Makikangas, 2003; Noor, 2002, 2004). Recently, the researchers have expanded the study scope from work–nonwork conflict to work–leisure conflict (Wong & Lin, 2007). The studies relating to the cause and effect on work–leisure conflict have been a core in the fields of hospitality and tourism.

This present study explored the work–leisure conflict from the aspects of leisure and work in terms of the previous studies which mainly investigated the work–leisure conflict from the dimension of leisure. When people are excessively involved in work, they would spend less time on family life and entertainment (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Consequently, more work–leisure conflict causes lower leisure satisfaction (Rice, Frone, & McFarlin, 1992). From the dimension of leisure, work–leisure conflict usually negatively influences individuals. In addition, studies in the dimension of work on work–leisure conflict are sparse. The present study thus investigated whether employees in the hospitality and tourism industries may have job burnout due to work–leisure conflict.

Moreover, the former study has shown that social support moderates the relationship between work roles and non-work roles. Terry, Nielsen, and Perchar (1993) reported that work support from supervisors and co-workers can reduce the negative attitude of role conflict on well-being, and spousal support is also known to reduce leisure–family conflict (Goff, Fick, & Oppliger, 1997). Social support can help individuals manage stress and become content with their present circumstances (Caplan, 1974). For what mentioned above, social support can moderate the relationship between work–leisure conflict and the related factors. This study on hospitality and tourism industries employees investigated the relationships among work–leisure conflict, leisure participation, job burnout and well-being and to discuss the moderating role of social support. We hope that the analytical results of the study can be used by human resource managers to minimize work–leisure conflicts in their employees.

## 2. Theoretical grounding and hypotheses

Based on related documented materials, the hypothesis of the study analyzed employees in the hospitality and tourism industries to measure their work–leisure conflict, leisure participation, job burnout, well-being, and social support, in order to understand the effects of four variables on work–leisure conflicts. The model of hypothesis is presented in Fig. 1.

### 2.1. Work–leisure conflict

The conflict between work and non-work roles occurs when the roles are disproportionate at work and in life (Greenhaus & Beutell,

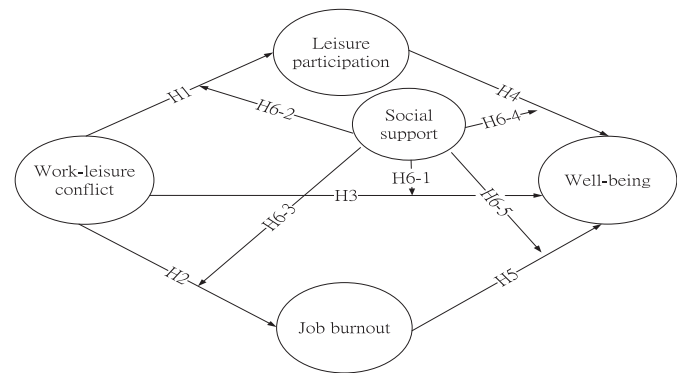


Fig. 1. Initial model and hypotheses.

1985), and it increases when the distribution of time for work, family, and leisure is unbalanced (Thompson & Bunderson, 2001). As an extension of work–family conflict, work–leisure conflict signifies that tourism industry employees spend more time on work roles than on other aspects of life, which consumes energy and decreases the time, vitality and opportunities for leisure (Wong & Lin, 2007). Therefore, work–leisure conflict is a mental pressure triggered by the struggle to balance work roles and life roles, and decreases the time, vitality, and opportunities for leisure activities due to the demands for work roles and work hours.

### 2.2. Well-being

Well-being is a positive, subjective feeling about life experiences (Andrews & Withey, 1976). By the participation in work, leisure, sports or interpersonal relationship, this emotion provides the potentiality for employees to meet their needs and to gain the sense of achievement and value (Argyle, 1987). In the cognitive dimension, well-being results from a satisfactory evaluation of personal life quality; in the emotional dimension, positive emotion is considered a pleasant emotional experiences, and negative emotions as grievance and discontent (Diener, 1984; Diener & Lucas, 1999). Moreover, previous researchers have conceptualized well-being in terms of pleasantness, life quality, and life satisfaction (Gilbert & Abdullah, 2004). Well-being is more than just a mental reaction. It can be dominated by the external surroundings, including interactions with friends and co-workers, and as participating in work, sports, or leisure; individuals assess satisfaction, positive and negative emotions in life with their personal experiences and requirements.

This study focused on the effects of work–leisure conflict on well-being in two dimensions: work and leisure. Specifically, this study analyzes whether work–leisure conflict caused by insufficient leisure time deprives employees of opportunities for leisure activities, and lower life satisfaction and well-being. It also examines whether work–leisure conflict caused by work overload contributes to job burnout, whether it has spillover effects on ordinary life, and whether it reduces life satisfaction and well-being.

### 2.3. Relationship between WLC and well-being

#### 2.3.1. The dimension of leisure

Work–leisure conflict (WLC) occurs when individuals cannot properly balance work roles and leisure roles. Leisure is a certain life-situation that is relatively free of the stress of cultural and realistic environments; therefore, it allows individuals to meet their inner needs to pursue pleasant experiences or conditions worthy of experiencing (Godbey, 2003). Ragheb and Griffith (1982)

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